Sacrilegious Desertion

1167 OF THE 4106. a

HOLY MINISTERY REBUKED,

AND

Tolerated Preaching of the GOSPEL

VINDICATED,

Against the Reasonings of a Confident Questionist, in a Book called

[*Toleration not to be abused.*]

With Counsel to the

NONCONFORMISTS,

And Petition to the

PIOUS CONFORMISTS.

By one that is Consecrated to the Sacred Ministery, and is resolved not to be a wilful Deserter of it, in trust that any undertakers, can justifie him for such desertion at the Judgment of God; till he know better how those can come off themselves, who are unfaithful Pastors, or unjust Silencers of others.

1 *Cor.* 9. 16. For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: For necessity is laid upon me, yea woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.

1 *Tim.* 1. 12. & 2. 9. & 3. 6. For which cause I suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed, &c.

1 *Thes.* 2. 15, 16. Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own Prophets, and have persecuted us, &c.

Printed in the Year, 1672.

Tolerated Preaching OF *Christs Gospel* VINDICATED.

CHAP. I.

Of the Author and the Title.

SECT. I.

Am one my self that am so greatly desirous of His Majesties Clemency, and that this present Toleration should not be abused by any, especially silenced Ministers; that if this had been all that Author endeavoured, I should earnestly seconded him. And I am not without fear

of the *Weakneſs*, *Raſhneſs*, *Injudiciouſneſs* and *Imprudence* of ſome that yet are earneſt and profitable Preachers. But when I find that by not-*abuſing* our *Liberty*, he meaneth, *not-uſing it*, and that he hath the face to *exhort us* to *deſert* our Office, when the King doth hinder them from forcible reſtraining us; and that, when it is Gods work which we are vowed to, he cometh to us (as the old Prophet) in Gods name, to charge us to forbear it, my Conſcience bids me help to ſave the weaker ſort that need it, from ſuch pernicious fallacies. And if I ſpeak plainly of the quality of his arguings, I deſire the Reader not to interpret it, as if I had not the heartyeſt deſire of Peace, and all Brotherly Love and Concord with all conformable, godly, faithful Miniſters. But words are not anſwered according to their *nature*, when the nature of them is not opened.

Sect. 2. Who the Author is, and why he reſolveth his Queſtion on the *Presbyterian Principles*, and paſſeth by the Epiſcopal Nonconformiſts, as if he were ſo ignorant of the preſent State of *England*, as not to know that there are many ſuch (when at the Kings return, 1660. it was Biſhop *Ushers* Form of Epiſcopal Government which they all offered for Concord, who were employed in that work) theſe are little matters, not to be inſiſted on. Only I ſhall tell him that I have met with few

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Presbyterian Ministers in *England*: though most have that name given them in their Licenses. A *Presbyterian* is one that is [For *the Divine Right of Ruling-Elders, unordained, having no Power to Preach* and *Administer Sacraments*; and *for* the *Government of the Church by Presbyteries, Classes,* and *Synods, composed* of *Teaching-Elders* in *Parity with these Ruling-Elders Conjunct, so that* a *General Assembly of them* is *the true Ecclesiastical Head* of a *National-Church.*] Of late, a *Presbyterian* is like the *Puritan* of old: A word which hath as many and as bad significations, as speakers have diversity of designs or intents. In one mans mouth a *Presbyterian* is an *Episcopal* Protestant of the sobereſt sort, who is neither for *Sects*, nor for *Church-Tyranny*; and so impudency hath called them *Presbyterians* many years, who offered the said *Episcopal Form*, which A. Bishop *Usher* proved to be the true Government of the ancient Churches. And so we have made *Episcopal Presbyterians, who are againſt unordained Elders*, and *for Bishops*. In anothers mouth a *Presbyterian* is one that is resolute againſt *Popery*. In anothers mouth a *Presbyterian* is one that is for the serious practice of a holy life. In another mans mouth a *Presbyterian* is one that is againſt *Bishops*. And so *Independents* and many other Sects would be *Presbyterians* too. And in other mens mouthes a *Presbyterian* is one that is of

Bishop *Reynolds*, and Dr. *Stillingfleets* judgment, that no Form of Government (beside the meer Pastoral Office, and Church-Assemblies) is prescribed in the Word of God, but variously left to variety of occasions. Among all these, when you speak with a Railing Ruffian, he must tell you which he means himself: But when we meet with a Divine that understandeth the common use of the Word, we must take him to use it in the first proper sense. In which sense I say again, that I am acquainted with few comparatively that are for *Presbytery*; but I know many that are for Pastoral Administration without Church-Tyranny or Schism.

Sect. 3. As the Author honoureth himself with the praise of being a *Lover* of the *Truth* and *Peace* (which commendation all the contending parties, from the *Papist* to the *Quaker* are as ready to give themselves) so I hope I shall the easilier obtain his pardon, if (believing him) I shall prove that it is *Truth* and *Peace* which he oppoſeth. And if I offer him a better way to secure them; assuring him that I agree with him in his main design, to bring the Conformists and Non-conformists nearer, and to a more amicable concord in the Work of God, *and not to drive any further from mutual Communion than they are.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Nonconformists Resolutions, and the true State of the Case to be debated.

Sect. 1. BE it known to the Reader, that the name of *Nonconformists* was not made by our selves, but by others, (as the names of the four Confessors, *Dan.* 1. was). The Titles which we assume, as signifying our own professed Religion, are but these, our Religion is *Christian*, and no other; In opposition to dividing Sects we are *Catholicks*; In contradistinction from *Hereticks*, we cleave to the *Scripture* as our Rule; In contradistinction from the *Roman Schism* and *Corruptions* we are *Protestants*, that is, we *protest* to cleave to *simple Christianity*, and to the Primitive purity and *simplicity* against their introduced Novelties and Vanities.

Sect. 2. As to the Point of *Church-Government* & *Worship* (the quarrel of the present age) 1. We easily confess that we are not all of a mind; which is no cause of *alienation of affections*, nor should be a cause of *mutual persecutions*; It being our judgment that Christians are to bear with one another in greater matters, than *Episcopal*, *Presbyterians*, *Inde-*

pendents, and *Anabaptists* disagree in. And if any among us have done otherwise heretofore, it was from a Vice Homogeneal to that of the present *Conformists*, which now they smart for; and the *Conformists* may repent of in due time.

Sect. 3. We take not the name of *Nonconformists* to be such a *Cothurnus* or Hose drawn over the several parties by your prudence as shall make them one, or tye them closer together than *Conformists* and *Nonconformists* are. I pray you try, if you will not believe us, whether *Papists* or *Quakers* take us or you for their greater Adversaries. Remember how after the Fire of *London* the Papists in Print did court you as men much nearer unto them than we are, and much liker to befriend them. And I doubt you will never make them think otherwise. We take you for men of the same Religion with us, and much fitter for our Communion, than such *Nonconformists* as *Papists* and *Quakers* are.

Sect. 4. But we that suffer from you (Hear it now, for you shall hear it from God ere long,) all the Poverty, Confinements, Calamities, Silencings that have been inflicted on us, because we would not *subscribe*, *say*, *swear*, and *do*——you know what; can no more go against our Consciences, in Conforming to one *another*, than to *you*. Therefore you must not think that *Episcopal*, *Presbyteri-*

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an, Independent, and *Anabaptists*, will be ever the more of a mind for this Toleration. Till Reason change their Opinions, they will live according to their different Principles, though they love each other, and live in peace. And because you seem to be ignorant of their *Principles* and *Purposes*, I will tell you some of them, that concern the matter in hand.

Sect. 5. 1. They take a Ministry to be ordinarily necessary to the propagating of the Gospel & the saving of Souls, *Rom.* 10. 14, 15. *Act.* 20. 17, 18, &c. 2. They suppose that this Ministry doth not save men, as Wizards think that Charms do heal men, by their *Presence*, *Tules*, *Names*, or *Habits*; By *standing* in the Reading-place, or Pulpit, or being called the Parson of the Parish, or saying his set words over them when they are dead: But by such *publick* and *personal*, *frequent*, *plain*, *serious Instructions*, as are suited to their *ignorance* *security*, *presumption*, *hardheartedness*, and *love to sin*; and such as in other cases would be thought fit to change mens minds and lives. 3. They suppose that when a well commended Speech hath been said to ignorant impenitent people, one day in a week, without any personal familiar conference to set it home, and make it more intelligible, the most make but little more of it, than if it had been said to them in an unknown Tongue, or at least remain still ignorant and impenitent. Yea, if Forms of Catechisms

teechisms themselves be taught them, it is ordinary with them year after year to say the Forms, and never understand the matter signified. 4. They suppose that a greater number of the conformable Priests, than they are willing to mention, do Preach so ignorantly and dully in the Pulpits, and do so little of this personal or private work besides, as that there is great need of a far greater number of assistants, than all the present *Nonconformists* be. 5. They find that some places, of many years past, have had no Ministers at all. 6. They are not able to confute the people in too many places, who tell them that their publick Priests are so defective in their necessary qualifications for their Office, as that they hold it unlawful to own such for true Ministers, and to encourage them by their presence, or commit the care of their Souls to such. 7. They think that some other places have godly, able Conformable Ministers, whom the Christian people love and honor. 8. They think that Parish bounds of Churches, are of humane prudential Constitution, and not of Divine Institution, or unchangeable. 9. They think that a Parish, *quatenus* a Parish, is not a *Church*; nor a Parishioner, *as such* a Church-member; for *Infidels*, *Papists*, *Hereticks*, *Schismaticks* and *Dissenters* may be Parishioners. 10. They think that the Magistrate hath the power of the *Temples* and *Tythes*, and *publick Maintenance*

nance and *Liberty*, but that he hath not the *power* of *Ordination* or *Degradation*; but a man may be a true Minister without his consent, and so I think all Christians hold. 11. They think that some of the *Nonconformists* were true Pastors of their several Flocks, before they were silenced and cast out. 12. They think that the ejecting them from the *Temples* and *Tythes* did not degrade them, nor make them no true Pastors to their Flocks. 13. They think that the Magistrates putting another Parish Minister in possession of the Temple and Tythes, did not dissolve the foresaid relation of the former. 14. They think yet that prudence requireth Minister and People to consent to such a Dissolution of their Relations, where they cannot hold it without greater hurt than benefit: Yea, and to consent that the imposed Minister be their Pastor, when he is fit himself, and the Worship performed by him fit for them to joyn in. 15. But where both are fit, they know no reason but they may take both the *Ejected* and the *Imposed* Person conjunctly for their Pastors, each being to Administer to the same Church, according to their various Liberties & Capacities. 16. They greatly difference between *London* & such like populous Cities, & Country Parishes, because the burning of Churches, the greatness of Parishes, and the paucity of Ministers in *London* is such, that the tenth person in several Parishes cannot

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come to Church if they would. 17. In such places therefore they purpose to hold their Meetings at the time of the Parish meeting, because it will be no hindrance to it. 18. So they do also in those Parishes where the Parish Priest is unfit to be owned in that Relation. 19. Where there is a faithful Pastor in the Parish Church whom yet half the people cannot hear, they will not draw the people from him, nor disparage him to hinder the success of his labors, but rather perswade them to honor him, hear him, and obey his Doctrine; and to judge of the Tolerated Minister but as of his fellow servant, of the same Religion, helping in the same Work, where all our labours are too little. 20. Where the Parish Minister is faithful, and the Parish small enough, and neer enough to Assemble in one place, and the people satisfied with the *Liturgie*, I suppose the sobereſt of the *Nonconformists* (for they are not all of a mind) will gather no Church out of that Parish, but will joyn with that Parish Church and Minister (supposing them united by consent) and will use their own Ministerial Assistance, at such other times, and place, and manner, as shall best tend to keep up Love and Concord, and to further and not hinder the successes of the publick Minister. 21. I hope no man worthy the name of a Minister, will dream that *England* should have no more Teachers, than

than there are (or are like to be) *Nonconformists*: Or will think it his duty to hinder the Labors of any sober Protestant Ministers: Nay, I hope they will all understand, that it was never more their Duty nor their Interest to cherish all brotherly Love and Concord with such; and woe be to that man who ever he be, whether a *Selfish envious Conformist*, or a *Schismatical factious Nonconformist*, that after all such sins and sad experience of the fruits, shall yet hinder the *Concord* of *Protestant Christians*, I had almost said, or that doth not heartily and diligently promote it. 22. He that had rather ten thousand persons stay'd idlely at home, or went to Sports or Drinking, in *Stepney* parish, or *Giles* Cripplegate, or *Sepulchers*, or *Martins* in the Fields, or *Giles* in the Fields, or *Clement Danes*, &c. than a *Nonconformist* should preach to them, I will not foul my paper by calling him as he deserveth, though he pretend that gathering a Church out of a Church, is a thing that he opposeth.

23. In all these Cases following, the *Nonconformists* will hold distinct Church-Assemblies from the Parish Churches. 1. Where the Parish Church is not capable of them, as was last instanced, by reason of the number. 2. When the Parish Priest is one to whom wise men may not commit the care of their Souls, and one whose Ministry is not to be owned, (I would there were none such.)

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3. When the Ejected Minister *in foro conscientiæ & Ecclesiæ verè sic dictæ*, retaineth still his Ancient Relation to his Flock, and part of them Schismatically separate from him, and joyn with an intruder publickly, that never had a lawful Call, and the other half separate not from their ancient Pastor. Its possible the obtruder, though he have the Temple, may be the Schismatick. Ask Dr. *Wild*, and Dr. *Gunning* whether they thought not so 14. years ago. 4. It may be some that are more complyant than my self with good peoples weaknesses and humours, when there is none of the foresaid Reasons, may rather choose to be Pastors to honest *Separatists*, or *Anabaptists*, than by deserting them to leave them to do worse. And what great matter of injury or provocation should this seem to any peaceable man? Envy is too odious a thing for any Servant of Christ to own. Is it in the power of *Anabaptists* to bring all their judgments to yours. And till they can, must they be quite cast off. Who knoweth not how many Ages the *Novatians* were tolerated by the wisest and godlyest Emperors and Bishops; yea, what black characters are given by pious Historians, of *Ithacius*, and his fellow Bishops, who first in *France* did set the Sword a work even against *Heresies*, and of *Cyril* at *Alexandria*, who first as a Bishop used it himself. 5. But that's not all: What if any number of persons as good as you,

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shall think that the *Liturgie* is guilty of all the *Disorders* and *Defects* which once were charged on it, and of some Doctrinal Corruptions since: And what if they think that the Parish Churches are void of Christs true Discipline, and are under an Alien, one which they judge unlawful. What if they say that yet your Churches may be true Churches, and all this may be submitted to, when we can have and do no better; but he that can serve God in a manner more agreeable to his Word, is bound to do it; and not to offer God the worst, when the King alloweth us to do our best. And if withall they say, that you refuse them and they refuse not you: You will not give them the Lords Supper, unless they take it kneeling (which I think they may do, but they think otherwise) you will not Baptize their Children without the transient Image of the Cross as a dedicating sign, &c. If in this case they choose a distinct Church-Assembly and Pastor, and Mode of Worship; what harm is this to you or any one, and why should it break Love and Peace? 24. But in this last Case I suppose the most of the Nonconformists that live in Country Parishes which have good Ministers of their own, will not call themselves a distinct Church (totally) but will hold their meetings as *Chappel-Meetings* are held; Preaching the Word and Communicating in the Sacraments in the best way they can among them-

themselves; but so as not to unchurch the Parish Church as none, or to withdraw themselves from their Communion; but will keep all loving correspondence with them, and seasonably sometimes Communicate with them, to shew their principles by their practice. For the benefit of Christian *Love* and *Concord*, may make it best for certain seasons to joyn even in defective Modes of Worship, as Christ did in the *Synagogues* & Temple in his time. Though the least defective must be chosen when no such accidental reasons sway the other way. And perhaps some *Nonconformists* own Administrations may be as defective as the *Liturgie*. 25. Where the people are satisfied with the Parish-Church Communion, I suppose the *Nonconformists* will only help to instruct them at seasonable times, and not meddle with the Sacramental Administrations. 26. The same practice may be done on various Principles; and many *Nonconformists* may gather Churches in the forenamed Cases, without turning *Separatists*, or forsaking any of their former principles. Their differences will appear in these respects. 1. They will not pronounce any of your Parish Churches *Null*, which have lawful Ministers. 2. They will not say that your Worship is such as no man may lawfully Communicate in. 3. They still hold that Parish-bounds are very convenient (though not absolutely necessary) to be

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Church-bounds: not taking every Parishioner to be of the Church, but none (ordinarily) but Parishioners to be of the Church. 4. They are driven from the Parish-Ministry against their wills, and had far rather hold their antient stations. 5. They will thankfully return to them when ever they have leave; And earnestly pray that these seemings and shews of separation may cease, the occasion of them being taken away. 6. They prefer their own manner of worshipping God, as better than the Liturgy in their opinion, and therefore to be chosen when they may choose; but they account it not the only acceptable Worship, but are present with you in spirit, desiring a part in the prayers of all true Christians in the world. 7. They set not up the Church-Government of the People over the Pastors, or themselves, nor any of the rest of the Separatists proper principles of Church-Government. 8. Lastly, they desire nothing more than as Neighbour-Ministers in love and concord to carry on with you the same work of Christ. And in all these they differ from Separatists, though they gather Churches.

26. The grand Difficulty to the Nonconformists in their present condition, lieth but in this one case, *Whether in competent Parishes, which have able and godly Conformable Ministers, the obligation to hold Union and Communion with the Parish Church, or the obligation to exercise*

ercise a more regular way of Church-Discipline and Worship than the Parish Churches do or will do, should be judged the more prevalent; And consequently whether they should gather Churches out of Churches in this case. For in the other forementioned cases the answer is more easie. I shall give my own opinion as followeth: 1. It is lawful and a duty to be a member of such a Parish-Church, when we can have and do no better. 2. We cannot have or do better, when it cannot be without a greater hurt to the Publick Interest of the Gospel, the Church, and the Souls of other men, than the benefit to us and others is like to countervail. That cannot be done lawfully which cannot be done without doing more hurt than good, and destroying the end.

Obj. *We must do that which God bids us, and leave it to him what shall be the success.*

Ans. True. But you must *prove* then that God bids you do it; for we will not take your word. Affirmatives bind not to all times: No duty is at all times a duty; Nay, out of season it is a sin. He that saith, *Pray continually*, would not have you pray when you should preach or hear, or be quenching a Fire in the Town: He that commanded *Sacrifice*, set some to learn the meaning of these words [*I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.*] There is few of you but would forbear a Sermon or Prayer to save your own or others Lives: And you receive the

Sacra-

Sacrament but once a moneth (at moſt) which the *Primitive* Churches uſed every Lords Day. 3. The ſame practice ~~than~~ in one place (where it will do more good than hurt) is a duty, which in another place (where it will do more hurt than good) is a ſin. 4. The Caſe is now of ſo great moment that no Miniſter ſhould raſhly determine it for himſelf, nor upon the deſires of ſome of the people only, but ſhould conſult with wiſe and ſober men that are impartial. 5. The *benefits* to be expected and compared, are theſe, 1. The pleaſing of God (when we know it is his will) and the profit of mens Souls, by the moſt regular manner of *Diſcipline* and *Worſhip*. 2. The ſetting up an imitable example of right *Diſcipline* and *Worſhip* to other Churches (but then woe to them that ſet up a worſe.) 3. The ſatisfying the Conſciences of ſome honeſt miſtaking people, who think (erroneouſly) that a Conforming Miniſter may not be Communicated with, or at leaſt not in the uſe of the *Liturgie*, or in a Pariſh Church, or that the Sacrament may not be received kneeling. 6. The evils to be feared, and compared with the benefits, are theſe. 1. The exaſperating of the minds of perſons for number or quality conſiderable, and ſo alienating them from their brethren, and hindring their good. 2. And thereby weakening the *Proteſtant* intereſt, in a time which requireth our greateſt Concord.

3. And the setting of parties against parties, and Churches against Churches, and turning Religion into contentions and mutual oppositions. 4. And the countenancing of unlawful separations, which will all shelter themselves under such examples; and the dividers will not see the different principles on which we go, while our practice seemeth to be the same. 5. And so it may be injurious to future Ages, by seeming to give them presidents for unlawful separations. 6. And it is not the least evil consequent, that we shall cherish not only the Error of those that think worse of the Parish-Worship & Assemblies than there is cause; but we shall also accidentally nourish their pride, who will think themselves a holier people, because they Erroniously over-censure the persons and practices of others. 7. The prime great obligation for the cure of all this, doth lie upon some of the conforming side; It were easie for them, not to silence Christs Ministers that are as wise and good as themselves. It were easie for them, not to punish a godly person so heavily as an Excommunication comes to, for the weakness of scrupling a Sacrament-gesture; and not to punish their Children with being unchristened, or themselves with Excommunication, who think the dedicating Image of the Cross unlawful, or think it their own duty to enter their own Children into the Covenant of God, rather than Godfathers that have no

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propriety in them, and they are ſure never intend to take them for their own, or uſe them as they covenant to do. 8. If on ſuch occaſions, true godly Chriſtians are caſt out of their Pariſh-Churches, whether they err or not, all Miniſters are neither obliged, nor allowed to deſert them, and ſo to add cruelty and affliction to the afflicted. 9. They that think they anſwer all by ſaying that theſe peoples ſcruples are but Errours, do but 1. Shew their ſelf-eſteem, who can call that Errour which they have ſaid ſo little to prove to be ſo (in ſome of their inſtances.) 2. And he talketh neither like a *Paſtor* nor a *Chriſtian*, nor a *Man*, that thinketh all that err ſhould be caſt out of the Church. 10. To diſcern whether in this caſe a diſtinct Church is to be gathered or not, is a work of meer Chriſtian prudence and muſt be determined by comparing the good and evil conſequents together, and diſcerning truly which preponderateth. And he that through Imprudence miſjudgeth either way, doth ſinne. 11. Therefore it is folly, and ſin for Miniſters (Conformable, or Nonconformable) to expect that in this, all ſhould go the ſame way, and to cenſure thoſe that differ from their Opinion, when they may be under different circumſtances. 12. They that live in *London*, where it hath ever been uſual to go to Neighbour Pariſh-Churches from their own, and where

cuſtome, and abundance of accidents make the inconveniencies leſs, have not ſo much againſt their different Church-meetings, as thoſe in Countrey Towns and Pariſhes have. 13. Thoſe that live where the *Nonconformiſts* are the main body of the people, and the reſt are ſuch for number and quality, whoſe diſpleaſure is of leſs publick conſequence, have the leſs againſt their diſtinct Church-meetings. 14. Thoſe who live where the *Nonconformiſts* are few, and the *Conformiſts* for number and quality moſt conſiderable, and are like to be greatly exaſperated by diſtinct Churches, muſt deny their own perſonal conveniencies, rather than hinder a greater good, and may not do that which others may do. 15. When the publick good forbids it, the tolerated Miniſters muſt not gather diſtinct Church-Aſſemblies, but joyn with the publick Churches, and help the people by their inſtructions at other times. 16. When the publick good forbids it not, the tolerated Miniſters muſt hold diſtinct Aſſemblies, for aſſiſtance in *Doctrine, Worſhip*, and *Diſcipline*, as near as they can to the will of God. But ſo as to further, and not diſgrace nor hinder, the honeſt Pariſh-Miniſters; living with them in Unity, Love, and Peace: and whether *de nomine* their Aſſemblies ſhall be called *diſtinct Churches*, is a caſe of no great moment, though I think that it is fitteſt to take them for

diſtinct

distinct Churches, secundum quid, and not *simpliciter*, as many Chappels be: Seeing though in the Assemblies they distinctly worship God, &c. yet they hold personal Communion in a godly conversation with the rest of the Christians in the Parish, and should sometimes also assemble with them. And so much for my own opinion in this case.

27. If Christians would but give over the censoriousness, contentions, and abuse of others, which different Assemblies in the same Town are usually employed in, I see not what great hurt it would do any, for *Anabaptists*, *Separatists*, *&c.* that cannot joyn with the Parish-Churches, to have leave to meet among themselves, and worship God together in peace.

28. As the weakness of the people inclineth them to causeless separations and disjunctions, so the doleful Pride and Selfishness of the carnal part of the *Clergie*, hath in most Ages made them too impatient with the peoples weakness; and make such a noise and stir in the World, if a few do but withdraw from their Communion, as if all that disowned them, disowned Christ. And all, because Pride would make every man a God to the World, on whom all must depend, whom all must honour and obey, and no man must contradict; and all that depart from them, are supposed to accuse and undervalue them. And

thus as of our own selves, some men arise to draw Disciples after them, so others set the Churches in a flame, for fear of losing any of their Disciples or esteem; and between both, how sadly and for how many Ages, have the people of Christ been torn in pieces. What harm doth it me or any other (if my Pride will let me be quiet) if men that differ from me in some Points of Judgment, do quietly Worship God, by themselves. But it is so rare for Separated Assemblies, not to make it their Religion and work, to make others odious, and factiously to draw Disciples and associates to themselves, that they must also thank themselves, that others are so impatient with them; so certain it is that all sides are too blame.

29. The right Diocesan holdeth that a Bishop is essential to a Church, and consequently that we have no more Churches than *Dioceses*, and that Parish-Churches are properly no Churches, but Chappels, or *Parts* of the Diocesan-Church: And if so, 1. Then he that separateth from a Parish-Church, separateth from no Church (though we think otherwise.) 2. And as he that went to any Parish in the Diocess, kept still in his own Church, so a tolerated Church may be as good a Church, as such a Parish, and it should not be made a hainous matter for any to go to it, by them that allow men to go from Parish to Parish.

30. The

30. The *Nonconformists* hold that the Ministerial Office is not to be taken up on tryal, or for a time, but *durante vitâ cum capacitate*; And that it is no less than, 1. Horrid Sacrilege; 2. Perfidious Covenant-breaking; 3. Disobedience to God; 4. Cruelty to Souls; 5. And unthankfulness for great mercies, if any of us shall desert our undertaken Offices (yea though a silencing *Diocesan* should forbid us the exercise of it, unjustly.) Therefore Preach and Officiate while we can, we must.

31. Having told you thus far the *Nonconformists Principles*, I will add, that [If there be any such *Conformable Clergie men*, as first will do all they can to silence and eject us, and forbid us to Preach the Gospel of Salvation, whil'st many hundred thousands that lie in ignorance and impenitency, need more help, and then will do all they can to hinder our Restauration, and to keep us silent: And lastly, when His Majesties Prudence and Clemency giveth us liberty to Preach, when they can no longer hinder us by force, would stroak us into silence and neglect of our Office, by a few such silly and confident reasonings as this *Author* useth, as if to hinder our Ministry and Labour one way or other were their interest and work, I will not offend the Readers Ears, by giving them the name that I think they deserve; but wish them to read, 1 *Thes.*

thus as of our own selves, some men [illegible] draw Disciples after them, so others [illegible] Churches in a flame, for fear of losing [illegible] of their Disciples or esteem; and [illegible] both, how sadly and for how many [illegible] have the people of Christ been torn in pieces. What harm doth it me, or any other (if my Pride will let me be quiet) if men that differ from me in some Points of Judgment, do quietly Worship God, by themselves. But it is so rare for Separated Assemblies, [illegible] to make it their Religion and work, to make others odious, and factiously to draw Disciples and associates to themselves, that they must also thank themselves, that others are so impatient with them; so certain it is that all sides are too blame.

39. The right Diocesan holdeth that a Bishop is essential to a Church, and consequently that we have no more Churches than *Dioceses*, and that Parish-Churches are properly no Churches, but Chappels, or *Parts* of the Diocesan-Church: And if so, 1. Then he that separateth from a Parish-Church, separateth from no Church (though we think otherwise.) 2. And as he that went to any Parish in the Diocess, kept still in his own Church, so a tolerated Church may be as good a Church, as such a Parish, and it should not be made a hainous matter for any to go to it, by them that allow men to go from Parish to Parish.

39. The

Churches before; but only to those that would *take advantage* so *to do from His Majesties Declaration*. 3. That he calleth them not *Parochial Churches*, but *Congregations*. 4. That he joyneth two questions into one, which therefore must be distinctly answered.

Sect. 3. My Answer is, 1. It is not advisable for any *Nonconformists*, who before held the Parish Congregations to be true Churches, and their communion lawful, and used to communicate with them, to change these principles, nor to renounce, or totally forbear such communion. 2. But it is advisable for them, when they are cast out of the Parish-Ministry, and forbidden to Preach in the Parish-Temples, but have leave to exercise their Ministry elsewhere, accordingly elsewhere to exercise it; either in stated, or occasional Assemblies, that shall be *parts* or no *parts* of the Parish-Congregations, as the variety of places and cases shall require, which Assemblies shall be *distinct* and *separate* from the said Parish Congregations, either as Chappels be, or (somewhere) as one Parish-Congregation is *separate* from *another*, being not one, nor in one place, if you will call that separation. But this but for a time, with Profession of great unwillingness, and of a desire to return into the *Parochial* Ministery, as soon as you can procure them leave: But resolving not to be

Idly

3. 15, 16. And to tell them (by what names or Titles soever they be distinguished) that I that am a dying man, would be loth to stand in their case before God, and that if they and I were well agreed, that there is indeed a God, a Christ, a Heaven, and a Hell, I think we should the easilier be *agreed in all the rest of our differences. Some Teachers need these plain Admonitions.*

CHAP. III.

The Questionists stating of his Question considered.

Sect. 1. HAving disclaimed the *Approving* and *Censuring* His Majesties *Declaration*, he questioneth [*Whether it be advisable, especially for the* Presbyterians, *either* in *Conscience* or *Prudence, to take advantage from His Majesties Declaration, to deny* or *rebate their Communion with the Parochial Congregations, and to gather themselves into distinct* and *separate Churches.*

Sect. 2. Here note, 1. That the *Episcopal*, or Erastian *Nonconformists*, have none of his *especial* advice. 2. That he seemeth to speak to none in *London* or elsewhere who *denied their* Communion with the Parish-

Churches

Churches before; but only to those that would *take advantage* so *to do from His Majesties Declaration.* 3. That he calleth them not *Parochial Churches*, but *Congregations.* 4. That he joyneth two questions into one, which therefore must be distinctly answered.

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Idle-

Idle, Cruel, Sacrilegious, and *Perfidious* till then, but to live with all godly conformable Ministers, with Christian Love, and Peace, and Concord, if it be possible, and you will give them leave.

Sect. 4. When you say [*They cannot but understand* the *Declaration to be a very strict Prohibition of all such private Meetings* as the *Law stiles Conventicles*] you know not whose *understandings you talk of.* 1. We know not, that the Law doth not call our *House-Meetings*, now tolerated (though the door be open) *Conventicles*: If not, it had been well for us, if you would have proved it sooner. 2. And if you are sure that the Law calleth none of the *Papists* tolerated private Meetings, *Conventicles*, we knew not so much: And why should you feign us to be as wise as your self.

Sect. 5. As to your three wayes, I answer you;

1. I believe the *Presbyterians* will joyn with the *Independents*, not as a *Sect* (as you call them) but in all that they think good and warrantable.

2. That they will exercise their Ministery, as they are by Covenant engaged, for Christ and mens Souls, and will bear with you, if you call that [setting *up* for *themselves*] (hoping yet that *you* set not up *wholly for your selves* that speak so.)

3. And

3. And they will worſhip God with the Sect of the *Dioceſan Prelatiſts* in the Pariſh-Churches alſo, as far as will ſtand with the due exerciſe of their proper Miniſtery: But will not promiſe you to give over Preaching to become your conſtant Auditors or Diſciples.

Sect. 6. You underſtand neither the *Men* that you talk of, nor *their Cauſe*: they take not the *Independents* Aſſemblies to be [*the Tents of Enemies* ;] they leave terms of *Enmity* among Brethren, to thoſe that have *enmity* in their hearts. Nor do they [*tamely deliver up the Cauſe.*] The moſt Nonconformable Miniſters of my acquaintance, whoſe judgment I ever asked of that matter, do ſeem to think as I my ſelf do, that the *Epiſcopal*, *Presbyterians*, *Independents*, and *Eraſtians*, have each of them ſome Truth and Good which above the reſt they do defend; and each of them ſome ſpecial miſtake, where they err above the reſt: And if we could know it, we would take the *Beſt* from among them all, and leave the worſt: And not maintain Church-quarrels, under pretenſe, that we muſt not *flie to the Enemy*, *and give up the Cauſe.*

Sect. 7. O the *confidence* of this Adviſer in his own underſtanding; that dare ſay [*That he is ſure that the Presbyterians have no reaſon to engage in a way of publick Worſhip contradiſtinct to our Parochial Congregations.*]

1. That

1. That is *contradistinct* which is not *opposite*, or *adverse*, but either co-ordinate (as one Parish to another) or subordinate (as a Chappel).

2. And what man! Is a *Vow* and *Dedication* to Preach the Gospel, *no reason* to Preach it elsewhere, when its forbidden us in your Assemblies? Is the alienation of Consecrated persons *no Sacriledge*? Is the notorious need of many hundred thousand Souls *no reason*? Is the exercising of a Worship and Discipline more agreeable to Gods Word than yours (we are ready to give you the proof when we have leave,) *no reason*? Is the relieving of many godly Christians, who are cast out of your communion, because they dare not Conform, *no reason*? Had we had leave to have confuted the silly reasonings of Mr. *Fulwood* and some such other *Pamphleteers*, produced against the *Nonconformists*, we had long ago shewed you cause to *repress* such self esteem, which dare say [I am sure *they have no reason*].

Sect. 8. And this man that is sure they have *no reason* for *it*, could instance in no greater than the Objection, that *It will seem an undervaluing their liberty*, and *ingratitude to the King*.

1. We have no reason to be ungrateful to the King, nor to undervalue our Liberty.

2. But did that move the *London* Ministers

ſters and others, to Preach *all this while*, before the Declaration.

3. When you have proved that *Greater Hurt than Good*, will follow our *Preaching* and *Miniſtry*; and when you have proved that *though all the Papiſts in England*, do *uſe the liberty of the Toleration* in the Declaration, yet the *Nonconformiſts* muſt not, but ſilently leave our *ſufficient Conformiſts* to do all the work againſt Ignorance, Infidelity, Popery, and Senſuality themſelves; I ſay, when you have proved this well, you may again bleſs the people with our ſilence, and perſwade us to ſilence our ſelves, when you cannot do it otherwiſe.

Sect. 9. But he ſaith (p. 6.) *Their ingenuity* and *gratitude* to *God* and *the King will be better expreſſed by their Conformity*, and *Loyal obedience to the known Laws, than by the uſe of the Liberty permitted to the contrary.*

Anſw. He knoweth that we muſt not give him our Reaſons againſt Conformity. He cannot but know that many that Conform not, in all the matters of Subſcriptions, Declarations, Oathes, Diſcipline, &c. (not medling with other mens Conſciences,) do think it would be in them a compoſition of ſuch hainous crimes, as they do forbear to name them, for fear of ſeeming to be accuſers of others, and to be unpeaceable: And if he think that ſuch toys, as Mr. *Fulwood's*, Mr. *Stilemans*, and Mr. *Hinkleys*,

Hinkleys, &c. should satisfie them, he thinks contemptibly of their understandings. And he that by such *poor temptations* as *those*, will yield to *what their Consciences fear*, can scarce tell what he may not yield to before he dieth. Let him procure us leave, but to publish ours Reasons *against Conformity*, and then let him tell us that *we were better Conform*, when he hath answered them. It's easie to talk when none must confute him, and to brave it against one whose tongue is tyed.

Sect. 10. His next Supposition is, that *the matter of this Liberty is evil.* I am glad it is not evil for the *Conformists* to *Preach* and *Worship God*, lest it would have been lawful to none at all. We are glad that Christ is Preached, even by them that do it *contentiously*, in *envy* and *strife*, to add to our *Afflictions* and *Bonds*: But we will not our selves give over *Preaching*, *Praying*, nor the rest of the *Christian Religion*, because such men can call it *evil*. He that saith our Preaching is *evil*, may tempt men to think that the Gospel which we Preach is *evil*, or that *Infidelity*, *Atheism*, *Sensuality*, and *Wickedness* which we Preach against is good or harmless. Is it *good* in *you*, and *evil* in us to Preach the same Gospel? If you turn to them that Calumniate us of Preaching Errour, or Sedition, the Law is open, our *Writings* and *Doctrine* are easily tryed: If we say evil, bear witness of the evil:

If

If not, take heed of calling it evil, Isa. 5. 20.

CHAP. IV.

Whether to gather themselves into distinct and separate Congregations, is unlawful in the judgment of the Presbyterians *themselves?*

Sect. 1. THe proving the Affirmative is his work, pag. 7, &c. But the *Presbyterians* do not love *confusion*, nor to dispute such blindly-stated Questions. They distinguish,

1. Between bare Local *distinction*, and *separation*; and that which is eminently called *Separation* in *England*, and denominated from the *Separatists*, which is [*separating* from the *Parish-Churches*, *Ministry*, & *Worship*, as *being no true Churches*, *Ministry* and *Worship*; or at least such as no Christians may lawfully Communicate with, in *Doctrine*, *Prayer*, and *Sacraments*, *when they can have no better.*] In the former sense (as is said) one Parish-Church is *separate* from *another*. And if there be any difference in their Forms or Modes of Worship; so was there between *Ba-*

sil at *Cæsarea*, and the Church at *Neocæsarea*, and between *Rome* and *Millane*, and between almost all the Catholick Bishops for many hundred years. And so now, one Parish-Minister prayeth freely in the Pulpit after Sermon, and before; another by a Form; a third biddeth prayer before; and a fourth prayeth not afterward at all. And yet these are not separated Churches, any otherwise than *Locally* and in such Modal differences.

2. They distinguish between a Parish-Church that imposeth nothing on the Ministers or People that God forbiddeth, and one that doth.

3. And between a Parish-Church that is Reformable, in that which notoriously needeth Reformation; and one that solemnly Covenanteth against Reformation.

4. They distinguish between a Parish-Church that is such, and owneth it self for such: And a Parish-Congregation that hath no proper Bishop, nor Pastor who hath the power of the Keys of Government, but is called by its Rulers only a part of a Church, (Diocesan) and the Minister, but the Diocesan Bishops Curat.

5. They distinguish between a Parish-Church where the Ministers in question are forbidden to preach, and the People to have the Sacrament, or their Children to be baptized, unless they will say and do such things, as they

they dare not do for fear of God's displeasure; And a Parish-Church, that driveth none such away from Ministry or Communion. And now will this Adviser prove that what any *Presbyterians* ever said in one case, must reach to all others, that are so different.

Sect. 2. He next questioneth, 1. [*Do you not allow our Parochial Churches to be true Churches?*]

Answ. Yea, those of them that have *true Pastors*, but *no others*, (in a political or organized sense.)

2. Quest. [*And will you not account such Congregations as shall be gathered to your allowed places to be true Churches also?*]

Answ. In some places we will, and in some we will take them but as parts of the Parish-Church; And in some we will take them but for *temporary Assemblies*, waiting for a fixed better state; And in some we will take them for *Churches secundum quid*, but not *simpliciter*; Even as the case of each particular place requireth.

Sect. 3. And hence follows the cry of *Schism, Independents, Brownists, rank Separatists, &c.* As if the Ministers of Christ did know no difference between *noise* and *sense*. Yea, we are told *of Schism from the Church of England*, when I would give him all the money in my purse, to make me understand what the *Church of England* is.

1. I know that the King is the Civil-Head or Governour of it. But it is a *Constitutive Ecclesiastical* Head that must denominate it, as an essential part.

2. I take it for granted he speaks of *a Church* organized in a proper political sense, as constituted of a *Pars regens*, and a *Pars subdita*; and not as an ungoverned Community.

3. I take it for granted that we have two Archbishops, and they tell me, that one is not under the Government of the other. And if that be true, we may have a Church of *Canterbury*, and a Church of *York*, but no one Church of *England* as denominated from one of them as Head.

4. I take it for granted that the Convocation is not the Constitutive-Head, 1. Because it is so seldom in being, that then we should seldom have a Church of *England*: For the Essence ceaseth with the essential part. 2. And the Canon thundreth against them that deny the Convocation to be the Representative-Church of *England*. If it mean of the whole Church, Pastors and People, then the People rule, and make Canons by them (as the Separatists hold:) And it is the Head of the Church only that we enquire after. If they mean the *Clergy*, then the Representative-Church or Head must be somewhat distinct from the Real represented. If it be the whole Clergy that is the Real Represented-Church or Head,

then

then we are Popular, or Presbyterian; for the Presbyters are the major part by far. And what Rulers are they that never rule the Church as one, by themselves, but only by Representatives. I confess easily that many Churches united under one King, and living in one Kingdom, and having thereby special opportunity for Synods, and Correspondence and Concord, may be called *one Church*, by a denomination, 1. accidental, 2. and humane, not used in Scripture; And we will not be so quarrelsome as to avoid that language where men will needs use it: But it is the *Thing*, and not the *Name*, that we enquire of: *What is that One Essential Constitutive-Head which maketh the Churches of* England *to be all one Church, in a proper political sense*, that is, *as a Governed-Society*? None question the *Civil-Head*; none question the need of *Communion and Agreement* among all these Churches. But the Question is only of the *one Ecclesiastick Constitutive Head*. And if you will have the Question to be *de nomine*, pardon us for holding that *forma denominat*. But if you will *denominate* many Churches [*One*] from *One Accident*, instead of *One Individual Form* or *Essence*; and if you will use terms in Divine Matters, which God never so used in his Word, we contend not against you, but only desire to understand you, when you charge us *with Schism from the Church of Eng-*

Land. We have observed what hath been the effect of such another enterprize in the Roman Empire: It was thought meet by Princes that where the Empire was One, the Church should be in some sort *One* also, which was under them. Whereupon *Rome* had the chief Patriarchate. But in time, 1. this *Humane* Unity (name and thing) is pretended to be *Divine*; 2. And this *One Imperial Church* (under one Emperour) is taken to be *One Universal Church*; as if the *Indians*, *Persians*, and all other *Christians* (even the *Abassian* Empire) had been part of it, and the *Orbis Romanus* had been *Orbis Universalis*. 3. And then no man is a Christian that is not baptized into this Papal Church, and made a Subject of the Pope. Tell us what you mean by our *Schism from the Church of England?* We divide not our selves from the King or Kingdom, or from the particular Churches as concordant in any necessary thing. If it be only that we agree not with the Major Vote in all *Subscriptions*, *Oaths*, *Discipline* or *Ceremonies*: No more did the Bishops in the Roman Empire, who had various Liturgies; nor *Gildas* with the *Britains*, nor *Ambrose* and *Martin* with the *French* and *Italian* Bishops; nor the Episcopal party in *Scotland* heretofore with the Presbyterians, when they were the major part. Is every difference in things unnecessary from the major part, *a Schism from them?* The

Bishops

Bishops thought not so in *England* fifteen years ago: We do not go so far with you, as *Gildas* with his British Clergy, who pronounced him *non eximium Christianum*, no *excellent Christian*, that called them *Priests* or *Ministers*, and not rather *Proditores*, *Traitors*, as he himself did. Nor do we make such a Schism as *Martin* seemed to do, who renounced Communion with the Bishops and their Synods (all his life) who had prosecuted the *Priscilianists* with the Secular Sword. Yet neither of these holy men are called *Separatists* or *Schismaticks*.

But perhaps it is our *Disobedience* to the *Church* that is our *Schism* from it. 1. But every one that maketh himself an Ecclesiastical Governour over other Pastors and Churches, is not therefore their rightful Lord. The King we know, and his Officers we know, but we know not all that call themselves our Lords or Masters. Not but that obedience is the easiest course of life, to a quiet humble mind: But fidelity to our King commandeth the disowning of *Usurpers*.

2. We confess that we do not actually obey the Civil unquestionable Power in every particle about Gods Worship which hath been commanded us; I need not tell you why. No more did the Christians for three hundred years after Christ; nor the Orthodox Bishops in the dayes of *Constantius*, *Valens*,

Valens, &c. nor the Protestants now in *France*, nor the *Calvinists* now in *Sweden*, *Denmark*, *Saxonie*; nor the *Lutherans* under *Calvinist* Governours, &c. We compare not our Rulers to any of these, in any other respect, but only as *Rulers*; but if you your selves are resolved to *say and subscribe*, and *swear*, and *do* whatever lawful Rulers bid you, its possible that before you dye, you may shew that indeed you are not of our minds.

3. But who ever took every act of *disobedience* in a Circumstance, in a *Family* or *Kingdom*, to be a *Schism* from that *Family* or *Kingdom*? Do you rule by such a Law of *Works* or *Innocency*, which cuts off men for every disobedience, and *censureth him that* obeyeth not perfectly in all things?

4. And methinks this should not be your meaning, because by Nonconformity, we more disobeyed our Rulers before their *Toleration*, than *since*; and yet it is our preaching *after* that you call our Schism from the Church. You see what trouble you put men to, to understand you, because you speak unintelligibly and confusedly.

If you tell me that the *Presbyterians* owned a *National Church* in *Scotland*. I answer,

1. So do I, as before described, that is, as denominated, 1 From an *accident*, and not from an *Individuating Form*, and therefore *equivocally* and *improperly*, 2 And *humanely*, and so *unnecessarily*.

2. And if *Scots* or any *Presbyterians* do it otherwise, that's nothing to me, who am no more bound to their Opinion than yours. And sure the Church of *England* is not called *One* in the *Presbyterian sence*, as an Aristrocracie, or as *Headed* by the *whole Clergie* conjunct.

Sect. 4. The rest, p. 8, 9, 10. need no other answer, then

1. That the old *Puritanes* never held it unlawful for them to preach in houses, even when they had no Toleration.

2. As they held it lawful to hold Lay-communion with Parish-Churches that have true Ministers, so do we.

3. They never said, it was unlawful to hold communion with *any besides* the Parish-Churches; no more will we. What Law tyeth us to be such *Schismaticks* as to renounce communion with all other Churches, except *Parochial* and *Conformists*, or what *Nonconformists* ever held it?

4. Whose conscience should sooner accuse him of *Schism*; A *Conformists*, that will hold Communion with none but his own party, but *separateth* from all the other Churches in the Land? Or ours, that resolve to to hold communion seasonably with all true Christian Churches among us, that teach not *Heresie*, nor preach down Holiness, *Love* or *Peace*, and deny us not their communion, unless we will sin,

ſin? Let the impartial judg which of us is the *Schiſmatick* and *Separatiſt*.

5. Do you not hold it lawful for a Miniſter to remove from one Pariſh to another; and for any man for his ſouls edification, to remove his dwelling into another Pariſh where is a better Miniſter? And what if forty Families do ſo? who calleth any of this Separation? And what if it had been into the Pariſh of *Dedham*, *Aſhby*, *Whitmore*, *Preſton*, when *John Rogers*, *Arthur Hilderſham*, *John Ball*, *John Dod*, all *Nonconformiſts*, were allowed to preach there without Conformity: Had this been Separation and *Schiſm*, or not? If *yea*, what Law of God or Man forbad it? What Church did they divide from? If *nay*, why then is it *Schiſm* to joyn with *ſuch men in other places*? Where lyeth your *Point* of *Schiſm* or Separation? Is it for going out of their *own Pariſhes*? 1. So Men in *London* have ever done to other Pariſh-Churches. 2. And who *ever* made a *Pariſh* and a *Church* Synonymal, *Jure Divino*? Shall mutable conveniencies be turned into *immutable neceſſities*? What then? Is it for going to a *Nonconformiſt*? ſo did thoſe before mentioned. Is it for going to a private houſe? 1. So did many *Epiſcopal* Paſtors fourteen years ago. 2. And ſome in *London* ſince the Fire. 3. And its an ill argument againſt them, that would

ſain

fain Preach in the publick Temples, if they could have leave. As far as I discern, this dust of *Schism* which you would cast into other mens eyes, obligeth you to wink hard, lest it be blown back into your own.

Sect. 5. The love of peace, and the fear of frightning any further from Parish-communion than I desire, do oblige me to forbear so much as to *describe* or *name* the additional Conformity, and that sin which *Nonconformists* fear and fly from, which maketh it harder to us that desire it, to draw many good people to communion with *Conformists*, than it was of old. But when both Law, and *Love* of *Peace* and *Concord* forbid us, so much as to name the Causes, it is disingenious for the culpable to take that advantage against us, and to urge us to do that which they themselves cannot bear.

Sect. 6. But with full sail of self-conceitedness he next comes upon us, with this as an undeniable proof, that [*our Members are taken out of true Churches.*] Who would gain-say a man of such understanding?

But 1. Do not those, as aforesaid, that remove from one Parish Church to another, remove from true Churches?

2. How many Bishops have written that the Church of *Rome* is a true Church (as *Halls* Collection against *Burton* sheweth you) and must no Churches therefore be gathered out of them?

3. What

sin? Let the impartial judg which of us is the *Schismatick* and *Separatist*.

5. Do you not hold it lawful for a Minister to remove from one Parish to another; and for any man for his souls edification, to remove his dwelling into another Parish where is a better Minister? And what if forty Families do so? who calleth any of this Separation? And what if it had been into the Parish of *Dedham*, *Ashby*, *Whitmore*, *Preston*, when *John Rogers*, *Arthur Hildersham*, *John Ball*, *John Dod*, all *Nonconformists*, were allowed to preach there without Conformity: Had this been Separation and *Schism*, or not? If *yea*, what Law of God or Man forbad it? What Church did they divide from? If *nay*, why then is it *Schism* to joyn with *such men in other places*? Where lyeth your *Point* of *Schism* or Separation? Is it for going out of their *own Parishes*? 1. So Men in *London* have ever done to other Parish-Churches. 2. And who *ever* made a *Parish* and a *Church* Synonymal, *Jure Divino*? Shall mutable conveniencies be turned into *immutable necessities*? What then? Is it for going to a *Nonconformist*? so did those before mentioned. Is it for going to a private house? 1. So did many *Episcopal* Pastors fourteen years ago. 2. And some in *London* since the Fire. 3. And its an ill argument against them, that would fain

fain Preach in the publick Temples, if they could have leave. As far as I discern, this dust of *Schism* which you would cast into other mens eyes, obligeth you to wink hard, lest it be blown back into your own.

Sect. 5. The love of peace, and the fear of frightning any further from Parish-communion than I desire, do oblige me to forbear so much as to *describe* or *name* the additional Conformity, and that sin which *Nonconformists* fear and fly from, which maketh it harder to us that desire it, to draw many good people to communion with *Conformists*, than it was of old. But when both Law, and *Love* of *Peace* and *Concord* forbid us, so much as to name the Causes, it is disingenious for the culpable to take that advantage against us, and to urge us to do that which they themselves cannot bear.

Sect. 6. But with full sail of self-conceitedness he next comes upon us, with this as an undeniable proof, that [*our Members are taken out of true Churches.*] Who would gainsay a man of such understanding?

But 1. Do not those, as aforesaid, that remove from one Parish Church to another, remove from true Churches?

2. How many Bishops have written that the Church of *Rome* is a true Church (as *Halls* Collection against *Burton* sheweth you) and must no Churches therefore be gathered out of them?

3. What

3. What advantage then hath every foolish Superstitious Priest above God, and over all good Christians? God bids us worship him according to his Law, and to do all *things* in *order* and *decently*, and to *edification*. And must not God be obeyed? No, if the Priest will not consent: For if he will worship God foolishly, with non-sence, *undecently*, *disorderly*, *against edification*, you cannot help it; his followers may be a *true Church* still, and then no man must remove to worship God better than pleaseth the Priest. He that is fallen under such drunken Readers, as I was bred under in my youth, that were drunk many times oftner than they preached (I am ready to prove it, for they never preached, but were drunk oft;) this poor man and his Family must venture their Souls on this sottish Drunkards conduct, because it is a *true Church*, and they must not go from a *true Church*; What a trick hath the Devil found to bind men to constancy in his service, so it be done in a *true Church*! Alas poor *England*, whose Teachers talk confidently at this rate, because they can say that they do it in a *true Church*, & did not the Parliament take a Church out of a *true Church*, when they separated *Covent-Garden* from *Martins* Parish. And so it is when Parishes are divided into two, one part is separated from the other.

Sect. 7. But factious Disputers see but on

one

one side. You thought not that you your self were all this while proving your selves *Schismaticks*. I undertake to prove that Pastors and People are the *Constitutive Essentials* of a *true Church*: That Dr. *Seaman*, Mr. *Calamy*, Dr. *Manton*, Mr. *Gouge*, Dr. *Bates*, Dr. *Jacomb*, and abundance more such, with the people subject to them, as Pastors, were *true Churches*.

Prove you if you can, that on *Aug.* 24. 1662. they were degraded, or these true Churches dissolved, on any reason, which any Churches for 600 years after Christ would own.

If not, you seem your self to accuse their Successors, of *Schism*, for drawing away part of the people from them (meerly by the advantage of having the Temples and Tythes) and so gathering Churches out of true Churches; so ordinary is it for self-esteeming men to talk to their own reproach and condemnation.

Sect. 8. But as to his second Objection, I will take his part; and though we differ not at all from the Doctrine of the Church of *England* (till the new Doctrine about Infants was brought into the new *Rubrick*) yet it is not *in minutioribus* that we differ from the *Conformists*; gather from it what you can. God knoweth we think the matters in difference, very far from *things indifferent*.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Whether the Declaration make the Nonconformists preaching more lawful, or their duty, than it was before?

Sect. 1. HIs *Sect.* 2. *Pro.* 2. is impertinent. For, 1. He knoweth little, if he know not, that the *Nonconformists did before* take such preaching and meetings to be lawful, and a duty in respect of the Law of God, where they had *opportunity* to use them.

2. But they take it for a *double* sin, to neglect a duty, when they have *Liberty* granted them by the King to perform it. But he knoweth we take God for our absolute Soveraign, and think that none can repeal his Laws, because that none hath any power but from him; and we suppose that he will pass the final sentence on Kings and us. To what purpose is it then among Christians to question, whether *Men* make it lawful for *Christs* Consecrated Ministers to preach, when *God commandeth it.*

Sect. 2. But pag. 14. he *thinks he may safely say,* [*that the Declaration doth not so much as uncommand* and *uninjoyn any thing, which the Law*

Law properly commands or injoyns].

Answ. Say you so? 1. The Law commandeth Magistrates to execute the penal Laws. The King forbiddeth them: Is not that to *uncommand* them?

2. The Law commandeth us not to meet above four in a private house for worship, otherwise than, &c. The King suspendeth, or dispenseth with this Command, and not only with the penalty. And is not a suspension of a Precept an *uncommanding*, though not a commanding of the contrary? I will not instance in *Juries* indicting Papists, &c.

Sect. 3. But he subtilly tells us that the Declaration meddles neither with the *Preceptive* nor *Punitive* parts of the Law, but only with the Execution, which is *extrinsick* to *both*. All Lawyers must come learn anew of him, what it is to *dispense* with a *Law*. As if the Command [*You shall examine* and *punish such* & *such men*,] and the prohibition [*You shall not punish them, but protect them*] were not contrary. Nor the prohibition [*You shall not meet above four &c.*] and the dispensation, [*You may meet*, &c.]

Sect. 4. But all this is utterly impertinent to them whose Consciences never allowed them to forbear their Ministry in *formal obedience* to any mens prohibition, but only when they had not power or opportunity to exercise; It's no duty which cannot be done. And

License

Licenſe maketh that *poſſible* which was *impoſſible*. He that untieth my feet, accidentally maketh it my duty to go.

Sect. 5. pag. 16. Let Mr. *Croſton* anſwer for himſelf, but the other two named by you, *Ball* and *Baxter* have much againſt you, but nothing for you; and underſtand themſelves better than you underſtand them; and he that ſurviveth, taketh himſelf to be abuſed by your Allegations, and provoketh you to cite any of his words, which are againſt *Nonconformiſts* preaching as they have opportunity. If you had rather that we were all uſed as Mr. *Joſ. Allein* was, you may ſee by his Preface to his Life, whether he was not for ſuch ſufferings rather than ſilence.

Sect. 6. His reviving his pitiful Objection, That we have the *approbation* of *Authority* for *ſeparation*, is but a contemptible ſporting of himſelf at the game he is beſt skilled at; Objecting *nothing*, that he may ſeem to anſwer it with *ſomething*.

Sect. 7. But p. 18. he will bring us to *Utopia* (*Morus* invented it) and there he will ſuppoſe [the *Villanies* of *Theft*, *Murder* and *Adultery unpuniſhed*, and *publick Meetings allowed where they ſhould be practiſed*.]

Anſw. 1. What ſhould the poor *Nonconformiſts* hear, if they thus Commented on the Clemency of the King?

2. But

2. But because you will force dumb men to speak, suppose that in the same *Utopia*, the *Philosophy* Schools which had faithful Teachers, and the Christian Churches that had faithful Pastors, were deprived of near 2000 of them at once, and those that came in their places, had the consent but of the least part of the people; and that they were such as did *Doctrinally* declare to the people that millions may be *PER*ˢ without sin, & that they, *ex animo*, approve of all the *Gregorian* Liturgie, and every thing therein, and of all the *Lutherans* Consubstantiation, and Church-Images; and when in Baptism they had vowed to fight against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil under Christ, they should contrarily upon deliberation make a solemn publick Covenant, that in their places, & callings, they would never endeavour to reform *Cardinals*, *Inquisitions*, *High-places*, *Consubstantiation*, *Church-Images*, or *Church-tyranny*, & so in part renounce their Baptism: And suppose a clement Prince should release the ejected Teachers from their restraints, and allow them to set up private schools of *Philosophy* and *Divinity*, and the people should say, We cannot in conscience cast our Souls on the guidance of the *P E R*ˢ and therefore crave the benefit of your conduct: If these suffering men shall seek to reconcile them to the *P E R S*ˢ

and desire them to have a better opinion of them, but yet tell them, that they will not deny them their own best help; *Quare*, whether they sinned by not being *P E R* themselves, or by not being cruel deserters of mens Souls? and which side is to be compared to the *Murderers* and *Adulterers*? I know this is not our Case in *England*; but if we must follow you into *Utopia* or *Moria*, let us have the equitable judgment of the place.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Inconveniencies *of our Tolerated Meetings.*

Sect. 1. NOthing more eaſie than for men that have ſome great advantages, to force *inconveniencies* upon other mens greateſt Duties. And we look to do nothing in the World ſcarce that ſhall have no inconvenience. I eat not one meal of ten that doth not make me ſick. But muſt I therefore give over? I can tell you of more than a few inconveniences of your own *preaching*, and Church-worſhip; and yet you will not give it over. But if any ſhall make thoſe inconveniencies againſt our wills, and to the grief of our hearts, & then tell us that to *avoid* them we muſt *Sacrilegiouſly* and as *Soul-murderers* deſert our Miniſtery, we ſhall eaſilier anſwer them, then they will ſhortly anſwer God.

Sect. 2. His firſt inconvenience is, that [*We ſhall lay down* the *Cudgels* and *beg* the *peace*, &c. of the *reſt of the Sectaries*, *as well* as *the Independents.*]

Anſw. A hard point to that Sect that is

Turba gravis paci, placidæq; inimica quieti; who know not how to lay down the *Sword*. But if we have been at *Cudgels*, we mean not to live and die at a work so unsuitable to our *Religion* and our minds. Reproach not him that said [*If it be possible, as much as in you lyeth, live peaceably with all men*] But *if it be* our *dislike* of *Schism* that are the *Cudgels* you mean, you are answered already. Pretend not to know our minds better than our selves. When were we against our own Preaching, as we had opportunity?

Sect. 3. He would next raise a suspicion, [*That our Principles change with the times,*] and yet saith [*It is a thing not easily observed in us in any thing else;*] Condemn not your self then by suspecting it in this, till you better know our minds: [*Or else, which is worst of all,* that *our interest lay at the bottom, and was the only Spring* and *Wheel of our zeal, and all our motions,* &c]

Answ. Who had been the more accusable of this *Carnality* and *Hypocrisie*, in the eyes of any standers by, the *Conformists* that take up the Principles that go along with *Safety*, *Wealth*, *Preferments* and *Dignities*? or the *Nonconformists*, that have near ten years been deprived of all Ecclesiastical maintenance? some lived in extream poverty, and some lain in Jails, &c. Sure, if we accuse not *you*, even

you

you, of *hypocritical* following carnall interest, one would think a little modesty might have cured the *Canker* that moved these suspicions or accusations *of us*, either as to these or former Opinions. But my expectation of modesty, I see by the following words, needs a pardon.

Sect. 4. He addeth [*Consider* I *beseech you, how like to Independent-Apes your new Congregations will make you look*, *&c.*]

Answ. That is to say, Come *Nonconformists*, if *you will not be beaten from your Masters work*, *we will try whether we can scoff and scorn you out of it*; *if that will not do*, *we will pretend Christs Name and Authority as forbidding you.* For *as Christ*, Matth. 4. *so you must encounter a three-fold temptation.* But we take pleasure in infirmities, and can bear to be made as the off-scouring of all things, remembring who was cloathed in Purple, and then mockt as being like a King. If you will take my *Spoon* and *Knife* from me, and then say that I *eat like an Ape* or a *Beast*, I will not be so prated and fooled out of my meat. If with *Diogenes* I had cast away my Dish to use my bare hands, or forsaken my House to live in a Tub, I had deserved your derision; but if you take my house & all my goods from me, you shall not mock me out of my poor Tub also; We would avoid *all appearance of evil*; But only in *things indifferent*, we will not

ceaſe *Chriſtianity preaching* or *praying*, when you can make it by your Artifice *appear like evil*? Let's hear the inſtances.

Sect. 5. [1. *Your Churches will be gathered* as theirs.]

Anſw. As much as all the Churches for three hundred years were; or the Meetings of *Flavianus*, *Meletius*, and others at *Antioch*, when they were prohibited the Temple. And as Dr. *Wilds* and Dr. *Gunnings* were fifteen years ago. Or if you will, as the *Joannites* were in *Conſtantinople*, till *Chryſoſtoms* name and *bones* were honoured by wiſer men than thoſe that caſt him out.

Sect. 6. [2. *You can adminiſter Baptiſm or the Lords Supper, to none but thoſe of your ſelect number.*]

Anſw. 1. Is it becauſe we *will not*, or becauſe you *will not give us leave*? Who then is it long *of*? O for modeſty! Tye mens feet, and reproach them for not going!

2. But is it not better to give an Alms to the bodies or ſouls, of *ſome men*, than of *none* at all? Argue thus with your Phyſicians, *You can medicate none but your ſelect Patient*; Ergo, *you are to be ſcorned if you medicate any at all.* And I profeſs, were it not for the poor peoples ſake, and my duty to God, I would give you (that deſire it) all my practice, and all the gains.

4. But

3. But why may we not in the allowed places exercise our Ministry, in baptizing the Children of *any one of your Flocks* that *shall desire it*, or *giving them the Sacrament*? I yet understand it not, unless for the avoiding of your envy and displeasure.

Sect. 7. [3. *You cannot exercise Discipline but by the consent of your people.*]

Answ. 1. We cannot be *Pastors* to any against *their wills*: If *you can*, and take that for your honour, keep it, for we will have no part with you. We *find* indeed that it is *your* Opinion to exercise your *Discipline on us* against *our wills*.

2. But though we cannot take men *for Christians*, nor *for our special Flock*, nor bring them to *repentance*, nor yet *absolve* them against their *wills*, we can *admonish* and *excommunicate* them against their wills, and deny them the *Lords Supper* from us; if they first voluntarily submit to our Ministry. We take it not for our part or honour to do in these things so much as you can.

Sect. 8. [4. *Neither can you have any Church-Government but in your single Congregations*, and *that too Independent on all others.*]

Answ. 1. Who is that long of? Is it not you that forbid it us?

2. But indeed we never desired to play the

Biſhops in other mens Dioceſs: If we pretended to *govern you*, would you take it for our *Orthodoxneſs*? I think not. I would you were of the ſame Opinion, & I would the *Pope* were of the ſame Opinion, and would let other men alone, and exerciſe his Diſcipline over none that he hath nothing to do with. *Baxter* whom you name hath told you, that Biſhop *Uſher* profeſt his Judgment to him, that even Biſhops in a Council (though they are there Governours of the Flocks, yet) meet not for Government of one another by Vote, or of other Biſhops, but for *Concord*. And *Grotius de Imp. ſum. pot.* hath ſhewed you that *Canons* are not *Laws* but *Agreements*.

2. But why may not many of us Miniſters meet in one *allowed place*, for ſuch *Agreements* in our Paſtoral Government? And no greater *dependance* do we deſire: I aſſure you we ſhould be glad if all the ſilenced Miniſters theſe thirty years had been *leſs dependant* on the Dioceſans.

Sect. 9. He addeth [*Thus as others are Independents by choice and Profeſſion, you will make your ſelves ſo by neceſſity; and* that *neceſſity ſuch, as you wilfully throw your ſelves into* againſt *all the light* of *Presbyterian-Conſcience, Prudence* and *Intereſt, by a needleſs* and *ſinful*, a *ſcandalous* and *miſchievous ſeparation*.]

Anſw. 1. Such confidence upon ſuch inſigni-

ſignificant reaſonings, is a great diſhonour to the wit and humility of the Author. He that no better knoweth their judgments, can tell *you*, what *all the light of the Presbyterian conſcience is*.

2. He can prove that our Miniſtery is *needleſs*, *ſinful*, *&c.* becauſe he can call the exerciſe of it *ſeparation*: As if the paucity of ignorant and ungodly Souls, and the ſufficient *number*, *ability*, *zeal*, and *diligence* of the *Conformiſts* made us and our Labours *needleſs* indeed. Alas, what thoughts have theſe men of *ſouls*, of *ſin*, of *holineſs*, of *repentance*, and of their own *ſufficiency* and labours. But, Sir, who made you a fitter Judge of the *need of ſouls*, than themſelves and all others? Next perſwade us that Tutors are *needleſs*, becauſe all in *England* are born learned. I have much ado to get ſervants in my own Family that have tolerable knowledge and piety: And can our *Conformiſts* alone ſufficiently teach many hundred Families, and prove that other mens help is *needleſs*? Try firſt whether you can perſwade men, that you alone are ſufficient to teach all the Children in your Pariſhes to ſpeak, and to dreſs them, and feed them, and that all other perſons help is needleſs. Get them to faſt all till you feed them your ſelves, and make them believe they need no other meat. We that have conferred with all the people of our

our Parishes when we were permitted, found that multitudes were almost as ignorant as *Heathens*: And yet our excellent successours, that do no such thing (as to any *two of them* that ever I knew or heard of) but see their faces in the Church, can prove all our Teaching *needless* to these poor ignorant souls: Is this humility, and Ministerial fidelity? Its *sin* in us to preach, and *duty* to the *Conformists*: I am glad they take it yet for a duty to *any*.

3. But is it not as easie for us to say, That you have *needlessly*, and *sinfully*, and *scandalously* taken our places, (I mean as to the Church-Relation, & not as to the Temples and Tythes,) and drawn *some* of the people to *separation* from those that were *before true Churches*? We say not so; but put not your selves on the hard task of disproving it, if you are wise.

4. But our necessity *Sir*, hath visible Causes.

1. God and our own consent at our Ordination, made our *necessity* of exercising our Ministry; We are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, nor that it was our *choice*: But God hath laid *this necessity on us, and wo be unto us if we preach not the Gospel, as we have opportunity.*

2. The Bishops to some of us, and *senior* Pastors to others, by Ministerial *Investiture imposed this* necessity on us.

3. The

3. The great neceſſity of multitudes of ſouls (which nothing but *groſs ignorance de facto*, *Infidelity*, or *Impudency* can deny) concurreth to cauſe this neceſſity.

4. The Law impoſeth a neceſſity on us, not to preach among you in the Temples: If then God ſay, *Preach*, and the Law ſay, *Preach not in the Temples*, we may conclude we *muſt preach out of the Temples*; if we have but as much wit as King *James*'s Hounds had, that at a double way, if they find the Hare hath not gone one way, will take it for granted he is gone the other. Here is then but two makers of our *neceſſity*, the *Impoſer* and the *Reſtrainer*; Reproach neither of them if you will take our council.

Sect. 10. He addeth [*In vain do you think to help your ſelves*, and *to ſatisfie the World*, by *pleading* the *moderation of your Principles*, *and that you do believe* our *Parochial Congregations are true Churches*, which *the other Sectaries deny*: For *beſides that many of the Independents acknowledge the ſame*, *this is* the *great aggravation of your Schiſm*: For *why then do you ſeperate from us*?]

Anſ. 1. We are glad that you confeſs the *Independents* themſelves are ſo moderate towards you.

2. We perſwade none to ſeparate from you.

3. Do

3. Do you *silence* us, and depose us from the Ministry, and forbid Baptism and the Lords Supper to all that have not as wide a swallow as your selves, and then ask, *Why separate you from us?*

4. Do you draw Churches to your selves out of our true Churches that were before you, and then charge your act on us?

5. Why come *not you* to the private Churches among you that have all this while been kept up? *e. g.* In *London*, why may not Dr. *Manton*, Dr. *Annesley*, Dr. *Jacomb*, and abundance of such, as fairly charge those that go only to the Temples, for separating from them? They say, They are as true Chuches as you. If their not hearing you is separation, why is not *your not hearing of them so?* Big words when men are got into the Saddle make not their Cause good.

6. But it seemeth that acknowledging you *true* Churches will not satisfie you, without (what?) *actual hearing you.* But doth not every *Chappel*, and every neighbor *Parish* then, and all the World besides your Auditory, sinfully *separate from you*? Some men can triumph in such reasonings for themselves, as would make another sick to read them.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the inconvenience from our Brethrens sence of Toleration.

Sect. 1. HIs next Section, pag. 21, &c. is as meer deluſion as any of the reſt.

Firſt, he argueth from the *Presbyterians* being always againſt a Toleration. Reader, all ſober Divines that ever I met with, uſe here to diſtinguiſh between *Tolerable* and *Intolerable* things and perſons, and to conclude that the *Tolerable* muſt be *Tolerated*, and the other not, though they all agree not how much is *Tolerable*. Now what doth this man but talk confuſedly, as if they had been againſt all *Toleration*. Look up man without bluſhing, and tell the World, Whether ever the *Presbyterians* maintained it a ſin to *Tolerate Presbyterians*. Alas, for thoſe poor people, that cannot try ſence from nonſence! with what ſtuff will ſuch men carry them away? If you talk of the *Toleration* of any that are Intolerable, what have we to do with it any more than you?

Sect. 2. *Any more than you*, did I ſay? Sir, vilifie not the wits of thoſe *Clergy* men that chiefly contributed to our —— ſo as to

to imagine that they did not know what they did, and foresee this day. Honour their *understandings* more, than to take them for so *ignorant*, (especially being *lowdly* foretold it,) as not to *foreknow*,

1. *What number and sort of men would be laid by.*

2. *How the people would judge of them and their Cause.*

3. *How both they and the people would go through their sufferings.*

4. *How wise, sensible, and merciful His Majesty would be, when he saw all this stir,* and *dissatisfaction of his people.*

5. *And that the preaching of silenced Ministers in private, would encourage all other Sects.*

6. *And whenever the door was opened for their Liberty, all others would endeavour to thrust in with them.* Who then I pray you hath done more for Toleration, you or we?

Sect. 3. But his next hath no bounds, and grieveth me to read it (O posterity, how will you know what to believe?) *viz.* p. 22. [*Have not you lately refused* the *comprehension*, and *denied so great an advantage to your selves, because you could not have it without a general Toleration.*]

Answ. No, Sir, we have not; nor should you have by a question vented such a falshood.

Name

Name the men that offered us a comprehenſion, and the men that refuſed it? If you tell us that *you*, or ſuch another offered it to one of your neighbours, you may poſſibly make your words ridiculouſly true: But if you mean that either the King or Parliament offered it, tell us when, and and who were the refuſers. If you mean any Parliament Speeches, it is not fit for us to talk about them. But you will not I ſuppoſe preſume to ſay that the Parliament ever offered either Toleration or acceptable comprehenſion (that is, to take in *Nonconformiſts*;) much leſs both.

There was a Rumor of one *Mans Speech*, called a *Presbyterian*, as if it had ſounded like a refuſal of ſome abatement, but if you will talk with him as I have done, he will ſoon ſhew you the falſhood of that Rumor.

If you could have proved that any *ſecret perſon* ever refuſed ſuch an offer, can you thence ſay to the *Presbyterians* that *they refuſed it*?

If you mean an offer that by a great Miniſter of State was made, be better informed of it your ſelf.

1. That it was not refuſed, but very thankfully accepted.

2. That for the *Toleration* of *other men*, *beſides themſelves*, thoſe two or three that meddled in it, anſwered.

1. That

1. That it was their desire that all *Tolerable Dissenters* might be tolerated.

2. That it was His Majesties work and not theirs.

3. That therefore those that were to be *Tolerated*, were accordingly to be spoken to of the Terms, for we were capable of treating of the Case and Terms of none but our selves. And after this the endeavour for our Comprehension went on to our content, till the Parliament sate, and presently shut the door against it.

I know of no other offer but this, which those few that dealt in it well know was far from being refused; so that a greater slander could scarce have been laid on men that have still so greatly desired A COMPREHENSION OF ALL SOBER PROTESTANTS IN THE PUBLICK MINISTRY, and A TOLERATION ALSO OF ALL TOLERABLE DISSENTERS, under Laws of peace and safety: This was still the thing which we begged for in vain: But who should be accounted *Tolerable*, we were never called to give our publick Opinion or Advise, that I know of. Repent of such Calumnies, and study not to aggravate your Fault by Excuses.

Indeed, if the offer had been made to them of a *Comprehension* on condition they themselves

selves would have APPROVED of an *Universal Toleration* of all those whom they account *Intolerable*. I doubt not but they would have said, *We thankfully accept Comprehension, but cannot approve of such a Toleration, but leave your own work to your own wisdom; we cannot go against our Consciences for any Liberty*: But other mens actions, are not ours.

Sect. 4. And he addeth old speeches against *Toleration*, *Universal intolerable Toleration*: Wherein we lament his want of common sense or modesty.

1. If he would insinuate that *we* are for an *Universal Toleration*, because we preach when we have liberty and opportunity, What dealing is to be expected from such men? When he confesseth that we have been still against such a toleration? When we have almost twelve years ago, cryed out, even to *unmannerliness*, that if possibly we might have been heard, to the Reverend Prelates, *Cast not out so many in the necessities of the people? O drive not godly people from your Communion for nothing! If you can prove Crossing*, and *your Sacrament-kneeling lawful, with Subscriptions, Canonical-swearing to you*, &c. *yet all that think otherwise should not be excommunicated, or forbidden to preach Christs Gospel: We have Fornicators*, and *Drunkards*, &c. *enough to*

excommunicate: O drive not upright conscionable Christians from your Churches! Force not Ministers to private preaching and *sufferings, which will certainly occasion Sects*, and *open a door to you know what.* And when we can no whit prevail, if these very men themselves shall say, that it is we that are for *Universal Toleration*, with what Forehead——

What man that hath not lived in a dream these 12 *years, hath made any doubt but that it hath been the interest and desire of Infidels, Papists and Quakers, that our ejections* and *pressures might be as great as might be, that so the Protestants might be weakned & broken by their own Divisions, and* the *chief opposers of these men* be *either consumed*, or *forced* by *misery to petition for Toleration, or at least that it might be granted as for our sakes*, and *we might be said to open to them* the *door, that they that confess we have been most against* it, *might be able* (but *quâ fronte*) *to say that it was our doing and not theirs.* But when mens wits have thus play'd the game to the utmost, they are but abusing themselves: For *they must dye*, I tell you, *they must dye, & be judged by that God that hateth Malignity, Cruelty*, and *Hypocrisie*, and *will detect all frauds before the World; when all that is now admired by* the *dreaming World, shall be levelled, obscured, and appear contemptible, even to them that sold their Souls to obtain it.*

Sect.

Sect. 5. Once more Reader, peruse all the Citations of this Author, out of Mr. *Edwards*, Mr. *Trap* (a *Conformist*, yet numbred with us) or the *Jus Divinum Presbyterii* (said to be written by Dr. *Roberts*, a *Conformist*;) only read them not with this Authors Spectacles or Eyes, and then tell me like a man of truth, whether thou dost believe that their meaning was, [*An Universal Toleration is unlawful: Ergo, Presbytery must not be Tolerated, if any others get the power*] or whether ever the *Nonconformists* said, [*We are not to be Tolerated*] or, *Whether the Episcopal* men *told* Cromwel *in his Usurpation*, [*It is unlawful to tolerate us?*] It is strange that any party who think themselves only or chiefly fit for *Legal possession*, should yet think themselves *intolerable*.

But if he talk of the Tolerating of *others*, that are *indeed intolerable*, let him talk to them that have to do with it; and let him first talk his friends into the tears of true Repentance (if they be not past learning) even from the greatest *EXPERIENCE* it self.

Sect. 6. But the man will seriously prove what he saith, *p.* 25. [*Can you more signally own, recognize, or more expresly give your unfeigned assent* and *consent unto*, and *approbation of both Toleration* and *Schism*, *than not only desiring to escape the penalty of the Laws, and to live quietly in a state of separation by vertue*

of it, but also by taking the utmost advantage of it, for the erecting distinct and separate Congregations to your selves.]

Anſ. 1. If he mean that we approve of the Toleration of *our ſelves*, & all *the Tolerable*; ſure we never did deny it: Let the enemy of mankind glory in the contrary, as his proper vertue. But if he mean (as he plainly ſeemeth) that we approve of the *Univerſality* of *Toleration*; Come, weigh his proof.

1. *By deſiring to eſcape the penalty of the Laws.*

Anſw. Now you ſpeak ſenſe, we feel your meaning. It is a crime worthy the name of Schiſm, to deſire to be unpuniſhed, when you deſire our puniſhment: We do not *toto pectore telum recipere*: What if you were for *hanging* and *burning us*? were it *Toleration-iſm* & *Schiſm* to be unwilling to be hang'd or burnt? While we have ſuch *Ithacian* Maſters in our own Coats, blame us not to deſire Toleration, and to thank the King for ſaving us from our Brethren.

The penalty of poverty, and *loſing all Miniſterial maintenance*, we never eſcaped ſince you ſucceeded us: Yet God that bids us ask for our *daily bread*, would not have charged our *deſiring it*, on us as our ſin, if the Law had forbit it us. Poor *Joſeph Alleine* and many another are gone, and did not eſcape the penalty:

nalty: I never heard that *Bradford* or *Hooper*, or *Latimer* were accused for *desiring* to *escape penalty*. Was it *Josephs* sin that the *Ishmaelites* and *Egyptians* were more merciful to him than his Brethren?

But, Brother, what good will our sufferings do you? What harm wil it do you if we escape? Do you feel your self ever the more at liberty when we are in the Common-Jayls? Are you the *fuller*, because some *Nonconformists* wants Bread? We have been heinously accused by others, for coming within five miles of any City, Corporation, and place where we lately preached (when Christ said, *If they persecute you in one City, flee to another:*) As if it were lawful to desert all the Souls in Cities and Corporations, or to take you alone for sufficient, where the *very number* of Souls proves you least sufficient. But would you be at more hearts-ease, to think that none of us are within five miles of you, nor teach any of the people the Gospel of Christ? You have with less noise endured *Infidels* and *Papists* enough within five miles of you? Alas, when the Stone is set on rolling down the Hill, where will it stop?

Sect. 7. But this is spoken conjunctively with what followeth: And what's that?

2. [*To live quietly in a ſtate of ſeparation*——] that is, Not to be your ſubject hearers: But,

1. Have not many of *us*, ſome conſtantly, ſome at times, ſat at your feet as your Diſciples.

2. If Miniſters be judged by you *unworthy* to *preach the Goſpel*, have they not reaſon to think you judge them *unworthy* to *receive the Sacrament?*

3. Are *you Separatiſts for not hearing them?* If not, why *are they* ſuch for not hearing *you?* But of this before.

Sect. 8. But the utmoſt is [*Erecting ſeparate Congregations to your ſelves.*]

Anſw. 1. You mean, it is ſin in us to exerciſe the Miniſtry which we are vowed to, and not to be Sacrilegious and cruel to Souls: For can we *Preach without Auditors?* And can thoſe Auditors be no *Congregation?* And can that *Congregation* be out of your hearing, and not be *locally ſeparate*, as every Pariſh-Church and Chappel is? Muſt two Congregations *be one*, or elſe be *Separatiſts?*

I know two Churches ſo near that the people may hear each other, and yet they are *two*, and therefore one is *ſeparate*: And I pray, which of them is it? It may be all in *England* ſave *Canterbury*, or rather

ther *Glastenbury*, are *Separatists*, for separating from the *first* Church: As if *Pythagoras* justly cursed the number of *two*, because it was the first that durst depart from unity; and all Churches in the World were *Separatists* except *Jerusalem*.

I pray you Sir, tell me, What if a Tolerated *Presbyterian* should read the Common-prayer in his Church, and use all your Ceremonies (though he fear *Perjury*, and *Lying*, and *Violating* his *Baptismal Vow*): were this a Schismatick or not? If *yea*; Then so is every neighbour Parish-Minister, or Chappel Curat. If not; than it is not a *distinct Congregation* that maketh *Separatists*. And then what if he *do not* use the Liturgie; doth that make a *Separatist*? Were you all *Separatists* that used it not fifteen years ago?

I shall next expect to hear that he is a *Separatist* that readeth in his *own Common-Prayer-Book*, and not in *yours*.

But I doubt the *Separation* is in this, that the Tolerated Minister will not be your *Curat*, and ruled by you: But remember that some are *Presbyterians*, and therefore for *Parity* of Ministers; and I and many others are so much for *Episcopacy*, as that we would not have *Prelatical* Jurisdiction given to those Parish Priests, who themselves are against *Presbyters*, and for *Prelacy*.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Inconvenience from the Nature of the Practice.

Sect. 1. IN all this Section, let the Reader consider,

1. How few words there be, which a Papist Priest in *Paris* might not say against the *Protestants*.

2. Whether this be not the summe of all, [*Preaching the Gospel hath hazards, inconveniencies* and *likelihood* of *frustration*; *Therefore it is your folly and sin to Preach it.*]

3. Whether there be not much that would not almost as handsomly have served *Celsus*, *Julian*, *Porphyry*, *Eunapius*, or *Symmachus* against Christianity?

Sect. 2. Do not you excommunicate and drive from your several Parishes the Members of Christ, for not eating with your Spoon, and then reproach them that will take them in whom you cast out?

Sect. 3. We still hold that Members of the same particular Church, should not live at a

distance

distance so great, as to make them *uncapable* of ordinary *Personal Communion.*

Sect. 4. We take your Warning: *Independents*, as you say, may over-reach us; Peoples inconstancy and weakness may frustrate much of our Labours; *Quakers* and *Papists* may deceive some; We adde, And you and others may keep us after all in *Poverty*, and in *Jayls*, for ought we know. And what of all this? *Therefore preach not.* Next say, *Therefore be no Christians; Therefore damn your own souls, if your temptations be so great.* No, Sir, But, therefore we will serve Christ the more resolutely, and trust him for our preservation and reward. The God whom we serve is able to deliver us: But if he will not, be it known unto you, that we will not cease to preach his Gospel, while we can, and we fear not being losers by him.

Sect. 5. But your *Will* seemeth to bear down your *Experience*, while you would tempt us, by the discouragements of *Difficult Assembling*, and the *Peoples Poverty*. Have those kept us from doing what we could till now? Will our Poverty be greater than you Consumists have made it? Have we served God about twelve years without one bit of the Levites portion? and cannot we do so till we die? There is an harmony in all your discourse: To tell us of the discouragement of *Poverty* from others,

thers, that would help us, were they able, when your Party hath so long kept us without a bit of Bread, but what *Alms*, or some mens own Stocks afforded them, is just like the rest. It sufficeth us to tell you, that we preach not for Riches, and we will not cease through Poverty. Talk at this rate to one another.

Sect. 6. When you say, that a *Toleration may reduce the common sort to an indifferency in Religion.*

I answer, Get your friends together then that have brought it to *that pass*, as that [*It must be this or worse*] and bring them to weep over their sins before God; That if a miserable Nation may not be saved from the Fire that you have kindled, your Souls yet if possible may be saved.

Sect. 7. But, (*pag.* 29.) you too boldly make your selves the Stewards of God's *Blessings*; and as Magisterially, without proof, pronounce that we are *out of his way*, and *in opposition to his Church*, and *contrary to his Word.*

Answ. For my self I have long been of an opinion, which one day you will pardon, that, *Perjury, Perfidiousness and Persecution, proud contending who shall be greatest*, and *covenanting never in certain points to obey Christ against the World and the Flesh*, is not the *way of God*:

If

If you take me for singular, there is no remedy.

2. And what *Word of God* is it that we *contradict?* I reade in the Rubrick of something about Infants, *Certain by the Word of God*; but I never heard in what Chapter or Verse it was.

3. And which is *Christ's Church* which we oppose? What Chapter and Verse saith, that only Subscribers, Swearers, Declarers and Conformists are the Church of Christ; and those that fear an Oath and Conformity are none of it?

CHAP. IX.

Of Inconvenience from our present Conformity.

Sect. 1.

HE next confesseth that [*most of us have hitherto held some measure of Communion with the Church of England*] And now [*if we depart and fall quite away*] (when we purpose to go no further from them, but rather come nearer if they will give us leave) then saith he [*You will publish to the World, that your compliance*

ance with us before the Toleration, was not out of ſenſe of Duty, or love of Peace and Unity, or any other good end; but meerly out of ſlaviſh fear of Puniſhment, &c.]

Anſw. 1. We will not reflect by recrimination, becauſe we would not provoke you more than needs.

2. As far as I can promiſe, we will judge of you no worſe than we have done, nor deny any Communion with you which we have uſed, and can uſe without neglecting our own work. As I conſtantly joyn in my Pariſh-Church in Liturgy and Sacraments, ſo I hope to do while I live (if I live under as honeſt a Miniſter,) at due times. But what if I had leave without Conformity to preach in the next Pariſh-Church? I cannot then be in yours at the ſame time. He that preacheth not, may hear you conſtantly: But he that may preach himſelf, muſt not ceaſe his Miniſtry, to be ſtill one of your Flock. We long ago publiſhed our Judgments, that *It is a ſin not to joyn with a leſs-worthy Miniſter, and a leſs-orderly Mode of Worſhip, when we can have no better; And that it is a ſin to tye our ſelves ordinarily to ſuch when we may have better lawfully*, that is (*conſideratis conſiderandis*) *upon terms whereon it will not do more hurt than good.* You ſee then on what terms we may vary our practices, without the crimes recited by you.

If

If now when we are preaching our selves, your will say that we are *departing from you*, (because we cannot be in two places at once), and then come on with all these Calumnies, we take but this to be your meaning;

1. To tell us that you think we so value the honour of our Names and Reputations with you, as that you can make us false to our Callings, rather than be censured by you.

2. That you have alwayes a Quiver full of such Arrows provided, and resolve, that if we will not give over our Ministry, and be ruled by you, you will make as many as you can believe, that we never had *sense of Duty, love of Peace* or *Unity*, or *any good end*, but *meer slavish fear*. So men, it's like, would say of Christ, when sometimes he preached openly, and sometimes departed from mens fury into the Wilderness or obscure places; Or of *Paul* that was let down by the Wall in a basket, and when he departed from the Jews Synagogues which he had before frequented; or those that fled from one City to another. It is a duty to preach when I *can*, and no duty when I *cannot*: And if others make the [*can*] and the [*cannot*,] is it *I* or *they* that change my practice? But if you teach men such apparently causless Censures and Reproaches, you may have *many* Disciples, but not very *good ones*. And some will thus paraphrase your words,

words, [*If the King will not let us persecute them for preaching, we are resolved we will slander them, and make men believe (on how hard terms soever they serve Christ) that they do it all but as cowardly self-seeking Knaves.*] What abundance have called me Rogue of late years, that never knew me, or spake one word to me before, or heard one from me! As to the rest [*That we proclaim our cowardise*, or *a love of licentiousness*, or *put on liberty for a cloak of maliciousness*] it all signifieth but what you have a list to say, and calls to us to long for the judgment-day of Christ, but yet to look well to the integrity of our hearts, and try our way before we go it.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Whether our Miniſtry by diviſions will let in Popery.

Sect. 1. I Love this Author much the better, becauſe he ſpeaks againſt diviſions, and becauſe he ſeemeth willing to draw thoſe men towards him, whom others drive from them, and becauſe he ſeemeth careful of our Proteſtant Intereſt, and deſirous of ſome kind of unity to that end. But, alas, have we ſo many years ago beſought his party with all humble petition and importunity, and diſputed it with them; that they would have pitty on the conſciences of thouſands fearing God, that they would have mercy on the thouſands of *ignorant ſouls* that need all our Teaching; that they would not caſt out ſo conſiderable a part of the Proteſtant Miniſtry that ſhould hinder Popery, and would not neceſſitate unavoidably thoſe diviſions, which by weakning the Proteſtants, would do the Papiſts work; and under the ſad denial of our petitions, muſt we now hear that (*the Pope ſhall come on the Puritans back?*) That word [*ſhall*] we have bin long hearing and feeling. To be Maſters of the Game is a great advantage for the diſpoſal of other mens reputations in this World, a little

while; but in the next, the ſport is ſpoiled.

Sect. 2. And really, Will Popery come in ever the more for *our Preaching*? (do you think we ſhall Preach for it?) or ever the leſs, if we renounce our Miniſtry? Why then will not *your ſilence* too prevent it; and ſo we may *all be ſilent* leſt we *preach in Popery*.

Sect. 3. *But it is Diviſions that will do it.* No doubt of it, if it ever be done. Come and impartially debate the caſe with us, Who have bin the great cauſes of Proteſtants diviſions, Conformiſts or Non-Conformiſts? But I am aſhamed to ſay that it needeth a debate. But O that you would yet repent of what is paſt, inſtead of reproaching thoſe that you have afflicted; And for the time to come, if we have not *unity* and *peace*, for my own part I can ſay, it ſhall be *your doing*, and *wilful doing*, to refuſe it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Counsel to the Non-Conformists, Ministers and People.

BRethren, you hear by this Author that the Conformists are greatly afraid of *Popery*, and that the danger by some will be said to be from you: but who ever taketh you for the Papists friends, the Papists themselves will never so esteem you. You see that some Conformists are desirous of *peace* and *concord* with you, for the common end, the Churches strength against all adversaries. God forbid that you should not be as forward to love and peace as they. I have these following counsels to give you before I go out of the World, expecting to have you ere long in a condition, which will require more *wisdom*, *holiness*, and *fortitude*, than I fear the most are yet possessed of.

1. *Resolve by the grace of God, against all temptations, and through all difficulties, faithfully to ply your Ministerial work.* You see how much Satan is against it, and how he tryeth every way to hinder it: sometimes by force and fears, sometimes by *flatteries*, sometimes as that old Prophet seduced the other, by coming as in Christs name, as an Angel of Light, and by Ministers of Righteousness.

He maketh not light of your Miniſtry, elſe he would not do ſo much againſt it; O do not you make light of it. Our Ordination, Vow and Covenant is Holy! If *Ananias* and *Sapphira* dyed for alienating conſecrated *money* by a lye, what ſhall we expect, if we alienate conſecrated perſons by a lye: Souls are precious, ſin is ſtrong, Satan is ſubtile, the World is deceitful, the fleſh is unreaſonable, deceivers have great advantage, time is ſhort; O therefore work while it is day, for the night cometh when none can work; Our own ſloath and ſin is the moſt dangerous ſilence. How many ſouls feed or famiſh, live or die, as we do our duty, or neglect it? Can you ſpare your fleſh or labour, when you think what impenitent ſouls muſt feel for ever; and what the Sanctified ſhall enjoy? Would you not ſhine your ſelves as Stars in the Firmament? Would you not be found by Chriſt *ſo doing?* Would you not convert Sinners from the errour of their way, when it is the ſaving of a ſoul from death, and covering a multitude of ſins? What ever Word of God deceivers may abuſe to ſtop your mouths, be ſure that *holy Covenants* muſt be kept; that *Sacrilege* is a ſin; that *nature* it ſelf tells you, no man hath power to nullifie your Obligation to *Charity it ſelf* in the work of mens Salvation; that the love of God dwelleth not in you, if you ſee your Brother have need, and ſhut up the bowels

bowels of your compaſſion from him: Men may regulate your charity for good, but not deſtroy it. If the poor were famiſhing about you, no Law can diſoblige you from relieving them. Be ſure that *neceſſity is laid* on all the Miniſters of Chriſt (though not by the ſame *way* as it was laid on the Apoſtles;) and woe be unto them if they preach not the Goſpel. Fear none of thoſe things that you ſhall ſuffer: they are the prognoſticks of your Crown: You ſhall judge the world that judgeth you: It will be joyful to hear, *Theſe are they that came out of great Tribulation*, &c. Even Dr. *Th. Jackſon* notably concludeth, that the reaſon why Martyrdom among Chriſtians now, is raſer than among Unbelievers heretofore, and that more ſuffer not, as *John Baptiſt* did of *Herod*, is not becauſe Great ones among Chriſtians are not ready to do as *Herod* did, but becauſe Miniſters more omit their duty; The deareſt duty is the moſt gainful.

2. I beſeech you, *Study harder that you may now ſo preach*, as that *you may convince men practically*, that *you are really uſeful & needful to the World, and that your ſilence is a real loſs.* They that now take your labours to be *needleſs*, are tempted to it by the *weakneſs* of too many. They can ſcarce find in their hearts to ſay ſo of any Eminent judicious Men; If when you have ſo long made the World be-

lieve that *silencing* you is a most *heynous sin*, you shall now preach so *rarely*, so *incongruously* so *injudiciously*, & *unskilfully*, or *coldly*, as to confute your selves, & harden those that were for your silence, how great will your shame be? If you will be thought more useful than others think you, preach *better* now than others do. I really fear, left *meer Non-conformity* have brought some into reputation as *conscientious*, who by *weak preaching* will lose the reputation of being *judicious*, more than their silence lost it. What now will you *do better* and *more* than others to prove that the Nation cannot spare you? I expect not great *Judgement* & *Learning* in all the *younger* sort, not those that in these times have bin kept from study, by labouring to get their children Bread: but verily the *injudiciousness* of too many among you, is for a lamentation. But the grand calamity is, that *the most injudicious are usually the most confident and self-conceited; and none so commonly give way to their ignorant zeal, to censure, back bite, and reproach others, as those that know not what they talk of.* I impute not this to you as Non-Conformists, but as sons of *Adam*: for experience hath convinced me, that PRIDE OF UNDERSTANDING, when men have little to be proud of, of *confidence* of all mens own apprehensions, is the vice of Men, Women and Children, when they are

past

past eighteen years of age, which seemeth to be most desperately uncurable. Few sorts so silly, but are always in the right, and others erroneous in comparison of them: as Bedlams pitty the ignorance of their Keepers; So that I fear not the prevalency of *Scepticism* in the world (though I fear *infidelity*:) *Self-conceitedness*, I warrant you will keep it under. Such ancients as *Ephrem Syrus*, *Macarius*, *Martin*, &c. who were of little Learning but holy and humble, and presumed not above their knowledge, were honoured in the Churches: but when the *Egyptian* Holy Monks would shew their humble pride and ignorance, by tumults and zealous madness, to seek the blood of the Bishops, that believed not that God had Hands and Feet like Men, and to destroy those as ungodly that were not as foolish as themselves, what could have bin more scandalous against the honour of Godliness and Christianity?

3. *Over value not your own Preachings, and under value not other mens, because they are Conformists.* The *number* and *necessities* of the *ignorant* and *ungodly* indeed do make your labours necessary, were you less fit than many of the Conformists: but that proveth you not *more able*, or your preaching better than theirs. Partiality may make fools of your own mind, think all well that you say, and all weak that others say: but the rest of men

will the more despise you. Be not wise in your own conceit; Look not every man at his own gifts and worth, but at the gifts and worth of others: In honor prefer one another: Pride is the first born of the Devil: and *pride* of *knowledge* and *goodness* is more common and pernicious, than pride of *Cumelyness*, *Wealth*, or *Greatness*. Mark that Preacher Conformable or Non-conformable, who *striveth hardest* for his *own honour*, and would raise it by *dishonouring others*, and is most *impatient* of all that *clowdeth* him, and is onely for those that set *him up*; and look out no further for a mark of *badness*, but take that man for one of the *worst*, how well soever he *preach* or *pray*. Except Christs Apostles had bin converted to the *teachable humble* state of little Children, they could not have entered into the Kingdom of Heaven, *Matth.* 18. 3. You wear not the Livery of Christ, if you are not humble, and apter to think meanly of your own gifts and doings, proportionably, than of other mens. How unsavoury is it to hear a Non-conformist come from a profitable Sermon of a Conformist, saying (to hinder the peoples benefit,) *This is poor dry stuff*, and carping at every incongruous word; as much as to say, *I can do much better*: Through Gods Mercy, *some* Conformists preach better than many of you can do.

4. Yet

4. *Yet difference between Conformable Ministers*, and *own not the Ministry of any that are utterly incompetent* and *intolerable*; Hear them not ordinarily: for though I say not that all their Ministrations are nullities, yet I say that you should not encourage an *intollerable undertaker*, to destroy himself and others. By *intolerable* men, I mean,

First, Such as are *ignorant* of, *or erroneous* against the essentials of Christianity.

Secondly, Such as are utterly *unable* to *teach* them *others*.

Thirdly, Such as malignantly Preach down the practice of a holy life. Or in a word, those whose Ministry is such, as really tendeth to do more hurt than good; from such turn away. Yea, *where* the *Conformable Minister may be tolerable, in case no better could be had, yet if indeed his teaching be so trifling*, and *sapless*, as *is like to do but little good, let compassion move you, to take more liberty your selves to teach the people there, than under worthyer Men.* Too many such young raw triflers, I confess I have heard my self: and I would not have *order* or *humility* pretended, to turn *Preaching* into a *Ceremony*, lest all Religion be next taken but for a Ceremony. It is a serious work, and must be seriously done.

5 *If you live where* the *Conformable Parish Minister is faithful (truly endeavouring the salvation of his Flock)* I charge you in the name

name of Christ. Do not onely, if possible, as much as in you lyeth, live in love, familiarity and peace with him, but also do all that you can to maintain his honour, and *promote his work.* Be not Strangers to him: Distance breedeth uncharitable thoughts. If you hear or see any thing that you dislike, go privately and lovingly, and tell him of it: If any behind his back dishonour him, rebuke them. If he look for some superiority over you, and some observance from you, deny it not: It is a duty to submit to one another. You can tell a *Prelate*, that he that will be the greatest, must be the Servant of all: Practice as you preach. He that scorns to stoope is proud, as well as he that would have Men stoope to him. Live with him as a *Brother* and as a *Servant*, in meekness, humility, and gentleness of behaviour: And do not like our young passionate Persons, trample upon him, as if his Conformity had put him, as a sinner, below you as more Holy than he, and under the Magistery of your Reproofe. You and I think that he hath sinned: But he thinks that it is we that sin: And he that is without sin, let him cast the first stone. I charge you *Love him*, as your selves, and behind his back say nothing, and do nothing, but what is fit to testifie such love. Let all men thus know that you are Christs Disciples: For all your Nonconformity, you are no *better than*

than he, if you be not more *Charitable* than he. If you ſet your ſelves in a dividing way, ſecretly to rejoice at his Diſparagement, and to draw as many from him as you can; you are but *Deſtroyers* of the Church of God: Call your ſelves what you will, I will call you *Deſtroyers* if you are *Diviaers*. Yea much that elſe would be your *Duty*, muſt be omitted to avoid Diviſion. The *work of God*, the *good of Souls*, the Defence of the *Proteſtant Religion* againſt *Papiſts*, require your moſt conjoyned ſtrength. And you are betrayers of all theſe, if you are *Dividers*. Suppoſe your ſelves as Chappel Curats under the Pariſh Miniſters, and ſo in concord perform your work.

6. *Therefore go as oft as you can to his Congregation*, and *hold Communion perſonally with him, and lead the people with you*. Do not ſay, Now we have opportunity to *do better*, it is *unlawful to joyn with them that do worſe*: For though it be not lawful for you to neglect your own Duty and opportunity, it is lawful for you by *Deed* as well as *Word*, to ſhew your *Chriſtian Concord* and *Communion*: and ſo to *do*, may make it at that time much better which elſe in regard of the manner would be worſe. Otherwiſe if one Preacher, pray and preach *better* than all the reſt, all the people ſhould be bound to forſake their Miniſters & go to him as one that doth *better*. But *bonum eſt ex cauſis integris*: *Diſjunction* and *ill effects*, may

make your *better mode* of Worſhip *worſe*.

7. *Therefore in Pariſhes where all may well hear the Pariſh Miniſter, I would not have you, without neceſſity, preach at the ſame hour as he doth, but at ſome middle time*; that you may not ſeem to vie with him for Auditors, nor to draw the people from him; But let them go with you to hear him, and after come and hear you (or before;) But in *London* and great Pariſhes where *all cannot come* to the Pariſh Church, as alſo in Pariſhes where the Miniſter is *not to be owned*, I perſwade you to no ſuch obſervation: It is ſo inconvenient to the people there, to be caſt upon unmeet hours, that I perſwade you not to do it.

8. *Where the Pariſh Miniſter is to be heard by you and your hearers, I think it beſt to preach ther but once a day, and at ſome neighbour place that hath moſt need, the other part.* My reaſons are,

Firſt, Becauſe the people cannot hear and digeſt four Sermons a day, nor three well: and thoſe that hear you twice, will not go to the Pariſh Church; and ſo you will but draw them away, from that which might profit them as well as yours. And it is *preaching well* that more affecteth people, then Preaching *long* or *often*.

Secondly, Becauſe, alas, you will hardly live, where ſome Neighbour Pariſh hath not ſo bad a Miniſter, as that the people have more

more need of help; and the rest of your pains may be bestowed on Week-day Lectures, as the people have leisure.

9. Therefore I greatly desire, that in such places you would bestow the greater half of your labour in private, in skilful exhorting people from house to house? If you did not so before you were silenced, repent betime; If you did, you have found the benefit of it. This is it, which few Conformists do. and in this you may best live as their true Assistants. Publick hearing without personal conference, seldom bringeth men to understand well what you say. Brethren, let me ask you, as before God: Why hath no more of this bin done while you were silenced? Is it not too much Hypocrisie, to cry out against them that forbid us Preaching, which is one half of our duty, and in the mean time wilfully to neglect that part which none forbad us? I speak not of them that were driven from all Cities and Corporations where their acquaintance enabled them, and forced to live where they had no such opportunity; nor of them that through poverty had not time. But most men might have done more this way than was done; This way the Papists have done their work. And it is very considerable, that most that come to your *Chappel Meetings*, are such as you take for the least needy, as being already turned unto God

But

But from house to house you may speak with the more ignorant: for some of them its like will hear you, And sincerity inclineth men to that way of duty that hath least ostentation.

10. *Preach Faith* and *Repentance*, the *common Catechism principles*, (which are of greatest need and use, and require the greatest skill in Preachers,) *and do not on pretence of going higher, trouble the peoples heads with unnecessary things*, nor turn them after vain janglings: much less against Conformity, or any thing that reflecteth upon the Parish Ministers. You may quickly kindle in your Religious Hearers, a factious opinionative kind of zeal, that shall make them fire-brands in the Church, and no whit tend to save their souls. And you may deceive your selves by exercising such an opinionative zeal, while you think you are doing the work of Christ. O how happy had the Churches bin, if instead of all the Schoolmens & old contenders curiosities of the Trinity, and all the blind disputes of Predestination and Free-will, and all the busle about Episcopacie, Presbytery, Independency, Anabaptistry, &c. the Churches had heard the Baptismal Covenant it self, with the Creed, Lords Prayer, and Decalogue well opened, and mens hearts had bin more fired with the love of God in Christ, rather than their heads heated with

such

such controversies, as the poor people cannot manage, but only by unskilful Teachers, are tempted by them to be disturbers of the Church.

11. *If there be any among your people, that by such a sinful unpeaceable zeal, will be censuring & deriding Conformists, Independents, Anabaptists,* or any *honest tolerable dissenters,* and *will be reproaching them behind their backs, and making* them *odious to the Hearers, rebuke them sharply,* and cherish not their sin; And if they hear not, rebuke them before all, and if they amend not, cast them out of your Communion: and as you love your selves, the Church and others, let not the proudest censorious people be your Masters: Take heed of that base complying humour, that maketh some they dare not displease them, least they should call them as bad as they do the Conformists. For if you come to this, it is the *Women* and *Boys* that have least *knowledge,* and most proud censorious passions, that will be the Church Governours. Keep your Authority, let them take it how they will, and be not servile followers of the peoples errours and irregular ways.

12. *Possess* your *Hearers with true Gospel principles* of *Love, that they may be first pure, then peaceable and gentle.* Preach zealously for *Love,* against love-killing envious zeal. Teach them to know that all men are imperfect

feet and faulty, and so is all Mens Worship of God; and that he that will not communicate with faulty Worship, must renounce communion with all the World (and all with him.) Unteach them that false conceit, that all Book-prayers are unlawful, yea, or all that is imposed: Read over to them those Psalms that have frequent repetitions and responses, that they may know that such are not unlawful. If it be lawful for the people to *sing Gods praise*, it is not *unlawful to say it*. Do you doubt of the consequence; Prove to us, what difference there was between the ancient *singing*, and our *Laudatory saying*, and you will find your task too hard. Unteach them that paultry principle, of placing Religion in being cross to the rest of the Congregation. As when they will not stand up at the Creed, or at all the Hymns of praise, when reason and use tell us, that standing up is a convenient praising gesture; and when the primitive Churches (from an unknown original, calling it an Apostolical Tradition) unanimously commanded standing only, in all the Lords Days Adorations; which because we cannot now well observe, it is decently confined to praises only. And in this the Conformists do *better* and *more decently* than you: and it is sorry perverseness to fly from a *better way*, because that others use it. Unteach them their unwarrantable self-made

Tests

Tests of Church Communion; as if there must be any other proof of Holiness needs given, besides a *sober profession of Christianity*, (that is, of the Baptismal Covenant) *not provedly contradicted by Heresie*, or *a wicked life*: If we are Non-Conformists, because we cannot comply with all that we think to be invented uncapable terms of Communion from others, why shall we make such engines to divide the Churches our selves, and do the very things which we condemn in others. Unteach them their expectations, that *all the Church must be satisfied of the sincerity of each Communicant*; or that the *presence of the unworthy*, who are admitted by *their own false profession*, or *by the Ministers* fault, doth make it unlawfull to others there to communicate. The Book called, *The Cure of Church Divisions* will tell you more such dividing principles, which you must unteach them. The Ministers that have bred and cherished these, have bin our subverters, and are our shame: and such principles are the shame of too many well meaning honest people. Woe to the selfish Teachers, that for their personal interest, dare not contradict them, but cherish them into their dividing errours; when their eyes are opened, and they see their mistakes, they will be tempted to shew their own dislike of them, by running as far on the extreame of formality; In a word, help to save

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Religious people from being *superstitious* while they cry out against superstition; and make them know that a Religion which consisteth in our own *modes* and *ways* of worship, and in decrying other mens, may stand with all unmortified sin; and that the *flesh* is no more denyed by *sitting*, than by *kneeling*, and that to say I am Godly because my gestures, and orders are more Scriptural than the Conformists, is a pittiful way for an Hypocrite to cheat his soul: and make them know that few things have hardened men against Religion, and made Non-Conformists a scorn instead of being helpers of mens souls, so much as to see that many place their Religion in superstitions of their own, *Touch not, taste not, handle not*; and make it piety to avoid that as sin, which is no sin: and then men judge of all the rest by this.

13. And I will presume to tell you my opinion, as of a matter, not absolutely necessary, but at this time, of such *convenience*, as if I were to keep a Church Meeting, I would resolve upon it, as my duty: and that is, that *your own practice now shew a sound* and *healing judgement about* that *Church troubling Controversie* of *Praying freely*, or by *Forms*; *even* that *now you would seasonably do both*. The contention about this hath bin childish, and yet a fire not yet quenched in the Church: while one belyeth God, as if he had forbidden all

all FREE Prayer in the Church; and others belye him as if he had forbidden all Forms or *Book*-prayer: when God hath left both free, to be done as edification most requireth. His understanding is low that thinketh either of them simply unlawful; and he knoweth little in such matters, that knoweth not, *that both ways have many* and *great conveniences*, and *both have many* and *great accidental inconveniences*, (which having enumerated else where I must not now repeat.) And they that are all for the one only, or the other only, shall have all the inconveniences with the benefits: but he that will *seasonably use both*, shall have the benefits of *both*, and the least part of the inconveniences of either; Therefore in the Churches of *England*, *free prayers* were allowed in the Pulpits, after the Liturgy.

And pardon me for saying, that when this petty controversie hath so much distracted us, those Ministers that use but one way onely, seem scandalously to the people to be onely for that way, and so do harden them in their errour, and keep the fire burning in the Church. He that prayeth only by Book or Form, perswadeth the poor people that *free prayer* is *Fanatical*, *uncertain* and unlawful: and they that *never* pray *otherwise*, perswade the poor people, that all Forms or Book-prayers are unlawful; if a whole party agree

in forbearing all Forms at such a time as this, when so many take them for unlawful. And so they corrupt mens very Religion, and teach them to make *duties* and *sins* to themselves which God never made, and thereby set them in a way of Hypocrisie, Self-delusion, and endless quarreling with others.

I prescribe to no man; and toleration so far taketh off publick Impositions, as that none can now say, *This Form is imposed on me*, and *therefore unlawful*. But (though I will not bind my self) I here tell the world, *That if my strength* and *toleration*, and *a call should ever more give me opportunity for the free exercise of mine Office, I would sometimes pray freely without Forms*, and *sometimes use some part of the common Liturgy*, and *sometimes use the Reformed Liturgy, which in* 1660. *was agreed on by the Commissioned Non-Conformists*, (though being done in extream hast, it should be reviewed and perfected:) *I would ordinarily pronounce the Creed*, (*as the Faith which the Church Assembleth in* the *profession* of,) and *ordinarily recite the Lords Prayer and Decalogue, and read two Chapters and the Psalms:* And they that would not joyn in this way of Worship, should freely go choose them a Teacher more agreeable to their opinions: for I would not serve the humours of any in their dividing errours.

And Brethren, endure me to tell you,

1. That pleasing the ignorant professors humours, is a sin that sheweth us too humane and carnal, and hath always sad effects at last.

2. And that I confess to you I think *your day is short*; and that it is now of more importance, what the *future effects of your course will be to posterity*, or those to come, than how it will take with your present followers. And when the History of this Age is written, do that now which you would have there recorded. My chief meaning is, *This will be a controversie when we are dead and gone: Do that now, which being recorded may best tend to the right decision of it then. Leave to Posterity now you have liberty, that example* (as well as words) *which thou would have them follow.* Tempt not future Contenders to plead that all Forms are unlawful by your examples.

If any say, *We shall thus loose our people, and the Separatists, who will cherish all such humours, will have them all:* I answer, We have too long tryed the pleasing way already, and see that we cure not, but cherish their disease. Take Gods way, and let us deny our selves, as well with the humourous people as we have done with the Conformists, and then leave the issue to God. And if they will follow Separatists, it is fitter that they be mislead by such erroneous persons, than by you.

14. And on this occasion let me say a word to this kind of Religious people: Is it not a shame to you that your worthiest Ministers should be fain to go besides their own judgement in Gods Worship to humour *you*? And that they must tell the world, We would mix *Free-prayer* and *Forms* in publick, but the people then will be gone to the Separatists. I say not that they go against their *Consciences*; For their consciences have directed them to omit what else would have bin fittest, lest crossing your humour, it should drive you away to your own subversion: But how came you to be so much *holyer* and *wiser* than the Holyest and wisest of your Teachers? Mark, is it not more of the Women and Apprentices that are of this mind, than of the old experienced Christians. Is it not a high degree of Pride for persons of your *standing* and *understanding*, to conclude that allmost all Christs Churches in the World for these *thirteen hundred years at least to this day*, have offered such worship unto God, as that you are obliged to avoid it, and all their Communion in it; And that allmost all the Catholick Church on earth, this day, is below your Communion for using Forms? And that even *Calvin* and the Presbyterians, *Cartwright*, *Hildersham*, and the old Non-conformists, were unworthy of your Communion: Would you have run away

from

from *Dod* or *Perkins*, or from *Cyprian* or *Auguſtine*, and ſaid, They are *formal Fellows*, not to be joyned with? Doth God uſe by Miracle to make ſelf-conceited Women and young Men, ſo much wiſer than the moſt ancient ſtudious experienced Divines. It is beſt then to turn Preachers before we grow old, and to avoid *ſtudy* and *experience* leſt it make us more ignorant than we were.

Brethren and Friends, I profeſs for your ſincerity many of you are our joy, and it is not a little that we have done and ſuffered for your ſakes; But I muſt tell you (for Adverſaries will tell it you) that for your *ignorance*, *injudiciouſneſs*, *pride*, *ſelf-conceitedneſs*, you are our *grief* and *ſhame*. We are hit in the teeth with ſuch *ſelf-wiſe ignorant giddy unpeaceable* followers, And we have nothing to ſay, but to bluſh, and ſay that you *mean well*, and that it *is not long of us*. Can Gods Spirit which ordaineth *Elders* to be Paſtors in his Church, be the Guide of your judgements, when with ſuch ſhameleſs pride you ſet up your errours againſt the knowledge of your Guides? If *you* are *wiſeſt* be *you* the *Paſtors*, (which ſome are prone enough to arrogate.) It ſhameth us, it grieveth us, to ſee and hear from *England*, and from *New-England*, this common cry, *We are endangered by Diviſions, principally becauſe the ſelf conceited*

ceited part of the Religious people, will not be ruled by their Paſtors, but muſt have their way, and will needs be Rulers of the *Church and them.*

Yea, I tell you with truth and grief, I am confident (next to mens own ſin, which leaveth them to a judicial deluſion,) *nothing hath done more to ſet up Popery*, and the *Prelacy you diſlike, than the ſcandalous inſtances of your unruline ſs and Church tearing humours:* And that you have made more Papiſts, than ever you or we are like to recover. Nothing is any whit conſiderable that a Papiſt hath to ſay, till he cometh to your caſe and ſaith, *Doth not experience tell you, that without Papal unity, and force, theſe people will never be ruled or united?* It is *you* that tempt them to uſe fire and Fagot, that will not be *Ruled* nor kept in concord, by the wiſeſt, and holyeſt and moſt ſelf-denying Miniſters on Earth. Even *Ainſworth* the Learnedeſt and Godlyeſt Paſtor of the Separatiſts, though he went with them beyond Sea, and was of their opinion, and carded wooll to maintain himſelf while he was their Teacher, yet could not keep that one ſeparated Church in peace. And muſt you, even you that ſhould be our comfort, become our ſhame, and break our hearts, and make men Papiſts by your temptation. Woe to the World, becauſe of offences, and woe to ſome by whom they come.

I

I thank God, I speak not my own case; I think those many Religious people that I have had the oversight of, are as ready to be ruled by me, and as undivided, as any that ever I have known? But alas, in too many places it is otherwise: Should the Ministers in *London*, that have suffered so long, but use any part of the Liturgy and Scripture Forms, though without any motive, but the pleasing of God, & the Churches good, what muttering and censuring would there be against them? And woe to those few Teachers that make up their designs by cherishing these distempers. One would think that their warning had bin fair. But —— *si nati sint ad bis perdendam Angliam* —— The Lord have mercy on us!

15. Seeing *places* and *numbers* and other Church-circumstances are matters left to humane *prudence*, be *sure that you prudentially discern the diversity of duties, according to the diversity of places and occasions.* These things I here include.

First, That you be not of those Church-tearers opinion, who must have all go just one way, in all those undetermined variable things; And will censure all, and take them for dividers, that do not as they do.

Secondly, That *Edification* or the *Publick good* is the *end, rule* and *measure* of these *Prudential* actions.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That in looking to this rule and end, you must not look only to your present Congregation or the present Age, but to all the Churches abroad, and to posterity.

Fourthly, That nothing here should be rashly done, but by great advise.

Fifthly, That therefore other Brethren, (as well dissenting as consenting Ministers) should for safety be consulted with, not to be your Governours, but for *Counsel* and for *Concord*.

Sixthly, To which end correspondencies of Ministers is necessary.

16. In those places where the *name* of a *distinct Church*, and that your *administration* of the *Sacraments is like to do more harm than good, it is your duty to forbear it*, and *only to Teach*. How to discern this, Prudence and Counsel must direct you: If there be a worthy Parish Minister, and the people are all or almost all satisfied (or may be satisfied by you) to communicate with him according to the liturgy, and if your own administration would stir up so much offence and hurt, as that the benefit cannot countervail it, the case is plain. But if you live in *London*, or where all *the people cannot come to the Parish Church*, or the *Minister is intollerable*, and the *good is like* (on prudent advise) to be apparently *greater then the hurt*, I know not but you may

1. Know your flock by name.

2. And

2. And take it either as a Chappel (in some places) or as a distinct Neighbour Church (in other places.)

3. Duely Administer the Sacraments.

4. And soberly and wisely use Christs Discipline.

17. *Be sure* that the *Concord of all* the true *Protestant Non-Conformists Churches, be established upon the simple ancient Catholick terms,* and not upon any self-devised Additions: That is, that all that own the Scripture in general, and the Baptismal Covenant, the Creed, Lords Prayer, and Decalogue in particular (as the summary of Holy Belief, holy Desires, and holy *Practice,*) be taken for fellow Christians, till it be proved against them that by *Heresie* or *wickedness* they nullifie this profession. This is the Rule and Test of universal concord. Here all agree: And if after this one Church will use Forms of Prayer, and another will not, one will Baptize Infants, and another will delay it, *&c.* they are differences that must be born, where Love and Reason cannot heal them, without breach of Charity, Concord or Communion; yea in the same Church, such different opinions may be born, further than as those that dissent from the Pastors mode of worship, will separate themselves when none rejecteth them. We have all naturally a Pope born in us, and when men have never so much talkt against

Popery

Popery and Prelacy, too many cenſure or run away from all that are not of their way.

If any tell you that ſo wide an enterance will let into the Church Socinians and other Hereticks, who will mis-expound the words, Ask them again,

Firſt, Whether Baptiſing men is not a taking them into the Church? And whether the Apoſtles and Churches for many hundred years, required any more of thoſe that were Baptized? And whether their buſineſs be to ſhew themſelves wiſer than the Apoſtles, and the primitive Church?

Secondly, Whether Hereticks will not ſubſcribe to all the Scripture, while they miſinterpret it; And whether all the Scripture therefore be not big enough for a Creed?

Thirdly, Whether all Hereſie be not a contradiction of ſome of the aforeſaid Articles of Faith, and he that ſaith, *I believe this Creed and all that is contrary to it*, renounce not all Hereſie.

Fourthly, Whether all Laws be faulty which men can miſinterpret; And whether the Law muſt be changed and enlarged as oft as any break it.

Fifthly, Whether all the Volumns of General Councils, be not yet too little by that rule, the ſence of many being ſtill controverted?

Sixthly, If we muſt have new Creeds and Church

Church Articles as oft as Hereticks misexpound the old, whether it be not in the power of the Devil and Hereticks to make our Faith ridiculously alterable every year, till it grow intolerably voluminous?

Seventhly, And who is it that must be still the Creed-makers or menders? And where will they stop? And how shall we know when we have all?

Eighthly, Is he a wise Pastor, that readeth how the Churches have ever since the Council at *Nice* bin distracted with new Creeds, and yet will take no warning? Read how *Hilary Pict.* inveigheth against them. When they vexed *Hierome* himself with suspicions of Heresie about the Trinity, (because he was not for the term *Hypostasis* as *a person*) his answer was, *They ask me of my Belief* (or *Faith*) *as if I had bin New-born* (or *Baptized*) *without a Belief*: As if he should say, Is it not a true and sufficient Creed or profession of Faith, which we all make at Baptism? Why else are we Baptized?

Ninethly, Tell them, that Pastors indeed must *know more* than all the *people*: but not by having a *new Creed* or *Scripture*, but at their *Ordination* they are to give an account of a *fuller understanding* the *same Creed* than the people must do: And the *Ordainers* must *examine* them where they suspect them of Heresie.

Tenthly,

Tenthly, Lastly, Tell them that no more than this is necessary, at the *door*; but if any *after* prove an Heretick, the accuser must prove it by him; and what is the use of *Church-Discipline*, but to reform him or cast him out? And *Laws* will not serve alone instead of *Judgement*.

If they say that a Heretick may do much mischief before it can be proved against him, Tell them,

1. That it must not be *Thoughts* but *Words* that do mischief in the Church; And *Words* are proveable.

2. That such proud tyrannical overdoers, have bin the Churches undoers? And it is *they* that have done as much mischief as most Hereticks: And that they that will be so much wiser and better than God, as to keep out all Heresie by their self-conceited ways, are the men that let in Heresie and Impiety, and keep or cast out faithful Pastors, and are the Officers and Agents of the great Divider and Destroyer of the Churches.

Let me add, Brethren, we that have lived in an Age, when the Engines of *Church-Division* have so sadly prospered, and have smarted thereby, and born our Testimony against them, are doubly obliged to *leave this Testimony of ours to Posterity* to warn them, that if possible they *may escape the snare*; And therefore TO PUBLISH THIS OUR JUDGE-

JUDGEMENT, *and* OUR OWN CONCORD ON THESE PRIMITIVE TERMS to all the World, as against the *Romish tyrannical-uncertain-confounding Church-dividing*, and *still-growing Articles of Faith*; Remembring that the same men that have made their Religion so big as that the *French* Impression of it (*viz.* their Councils) is too dear for the purse of a Non-conformable Minister; can yet tell you that even Faith in Christ himself (explicite) is not absolutely necessary, at least to justification, and that the knowledge even of much of the Law of nature as well as of the Gospel may not be absolutely necessary, as *Sancta Clara, Deus-Nat-Grat. Problem.* 15. and 16. proveth out of the Schoolmen at large.

18. *Manage* your *Ministerial converse prudently* and *piously*. The converse of Ministers is of great use, and therefore frequent Meetings needful: Use them to these ends.

1. To advise and prevent the effects of rashness or imprudencie in Church affairs: when every weak man hath the use of the wisdom of all his seniors, it is safe.

2. To preserve Concord, and prevent backbitings, animosities and factions, and discordant scandalous singularities.

3. That young Ministers may be Learners as well as Teachers, and may grow up under the Helpes of their Seniors.

I think therefore you may best thus improve your Converse.

I. Often meet for fasting and prayer, to lament our former and later sin, and to pray for the Church of Christ and for all men; for the King and all in Authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all Godliness and honesty.

II. Set up constant regular Disputations, (not about trifles, nor with litigious licentiousness) But about the grounds of our Religion, especially the differences between us and the Socinians, and Papists; And this with School order, under Moderation. Because,

1. Too many of us are young and unstudyed in these matters, and little fit to deal with the Philistins Goliahs, and have great need to increase in holy defensive skill.

2. It will by the bounds of order prevent all contentions and wranglings, and medling with Rulers or other mens matters, and all loss of time by impertinent discourse.

III. Counsel and *Concord* about Church practice must take up the rest of your time. And these three seasonably used *Prayer*, *Disputation*, and *Counsel* will conduce much to your growth and strength.

But see that Ministerial Meetings turn not *from Counsel* and *Agreement* to *Formality* and *Usurpation* of a *Ruling power* over one another,

other, and so degenerate not into Synodical Church-tyranny; much less usurpe the Magistrates right: For Synods ill managed have bin the Fevers and Pleurisies of the Churches.

19. Therefore be *sure to keep out, both* the *Tyranny* of *Major Votes*, and of the *proud Magisterial self-arrogations of any individuals*, that *think all others must stoop to them.*

1. When it is once thought that the Major *Vote* must carry it, an *Italian* Synod, will tyrannize; and every weak self-conceited man, that hath nothing of sence to say against you, will charge nine Learned judicious grave Divines with *Insolency*, if they will not be governed by ten that are *unlearned* or *injudicious* self-esteemers. *Voting* is not for government, but for *Concord*; And not to be used, (lest it seem an appearance or introduction of usurpation,) except in cases where meer *Concord* is your work.

2. But nothing hath more plagued the Church than the *Pride* and *Arrogancy* of some of the Pastors, that think they are wronged if they may not Rule. Think not that this Spirit is only in Papists or Dioceſans; Pride is the heart of the old man, and born in all; And doleful experience telleth how it surviveth in too many Antiprelatical Ministers, of humbling principles, and unhumbled souls. Do we not know that the Pride of *some among*

our selves, that must *be All*, and *do all*, till they have *undone all*, is the very thing, that hath silenced so many Ministers, and brought us to the state that we are now in? There are some men that must only be heard in all debates, and seldom hear; who are *angry* if they be gainsaid; who think that nimble Tongues, or popular Interest, or grey hairs, must pass for uncontrolled reason. And they study to make parties, and set up their own Dictates, by passion or indirect contrivances: They can seldom debate a cause, but their spleen swelleth against those that say not as they say, but contradict them, and they secretly back-bite them to blast their names! They note those that follow them, and those that oppose them, and make two parties of them. And all cometh from the common sin of man-kind, *An unhumbled overconfident understanding*.

These men must first be meekly desired to be quiet, and to let you be quiet, and to remember that Non-conformists are not for self-obtruding Prelacy; And that they are Brethren and not Lords: If that will not do, try by Prayer to prevail with God, for more of *humility* and *peace* in his Ministers. If that will not do, silently bear their importunity with neglect: If that do not, Meet without them:

3. And

3. And yet there is as great a miſchief as any of theſe to be avoided alſo: Which is the *ſelf-conceitedneſs* and Pride of the younger and the more injudicious Sort of Miniſters, hindering them from following the Counſels of wiſer experienced men. For though we muſt have no arrogant Lordly Uſurpers among us, yet all that know any thing muſt confeſs, that in all profeſſions *wiſe* and *eximious* men are few: It is but to few Divines that God giveth clear and accurate judgments; And undoubtedly there is a three-fold Superiority and ſubmiſſion of divine obligation,

1. Of Subjects to men in Office over them.
2. Of the younger to the Elder.
3. Of them that have leſs knowledge, to them that have more. For *Office* and *Seniority* are but formalities, did they not ſuppoſe an eximious *fitneſs* by Superior *knowledge*. If therefore God endow here and there one man with extraordinary judgement, it is the wiſdom and happineſs of the times to know him, and to kindle their Torches at his fire: So did one *Luther*, one *Melanchthon*, one *Calvin*, one *Eraſmus*, one *Jewel*, *Whitakers*, *Reignolds*, *Davenant*, &c. profit many. You may go a hundred miles amongſt the leſs judicious ſort, and miſs of that light which one *Ameſius*, one *Camero*, one *Strangius*, one *le Blanch*, &c. could ſhew the

world. And it is the Plague of corrupted nature that *Ignorance* keepeth men from *knowing* it self, and not one of a multitude (even of Religious men) who are *injudicious* will believe that they are injudicious; but every man is so much the more confident that he is in the right and others erre, by how much the more he erreth himself: so that few ignorant Ministers are teachable, but think that they are too wise to learn, because by office they undertake to teach: But through Gods mercy, my own converse hath bin with an humble sort of Ministers, which was the occasion of our unity and peace. And *London* and the Countrey have many such, who I hope will be able to resist the dividing attempts of the *self ignorant* and self-conceited.

20. Lastly, *Spend this little time as in the way to speedy sufferings* and *death*: Your present Winters day is short. Work hard: Live wisely: Suppose your tryal were the next year: Behave your selves as men that stand in prospect of the Grave: It is not likely that God will pass over twenty years wilfull divisions, wantonness, proud contention, self-distraction, scandals, and great sins so little repented of, that men cannot endure to hear them named, with so short or small a suffering as we have undergone. And the same Spirit yet blinding the guilty, and keeping some of the separating party in Impenitence,

tence, and working still by unlawful means to their unlawful ends, is the fearful Prognostick, that more of the old effects are to be produced by the old uncured cause. O be not partakers in the guilt and blindness lest you partake of the destruction, and *dementation be the sure prognostick of perdition.* But O Lord spare thy people, and bless thine Inheritance, and let not the weakness or willfulness of the Pastors or people, deliver it up as a prey to the Destroyer. And though our folly and scandal have made us a scorn, let it not turn to the extirpation of true Religion, and to the further advantage of *Church-tyranny, Ignorance,* or *Malignity* in the world. And if we the fooliſh sinful Pastors, have forfeited our honour and station in thy Church, let not the *Tyrannical Fooliſh* and *Wicked,* but those that shall be *wiser, holyer* and more faithfully and successfully *diligent* succeed us.

CHAP. XII.

An humble Petition to the Conformists.

Sect. 1. FAthers and Brethren, though I presumed to counsel the Non-Conformists as my equals, I will presume no higher with you, than to lay my self at your Feet, and humbly a second time to become your Petitioner for the souls of men, for the Gospel, the Church, and the interest of Christ. It is your Office to be Petitioners to mankind for Christ, and to beseech them in his stead to be reconciled to God. And a man might hope that one that should become a Petitioner to you, that your selves would not destroy that Church, might find acceptance and prevail. But Satan hath got so great advantage, that the wisest man living is uncapable of speaking rightly to you without offence. He that can draw men into *great disgraceful sin*, hath thereby raised a Bulwark to defend his work. To be *silent* and *comply*, is to be cruel to the *sinner* and *himself*, and who can do it that believeth Death and Judgement: To call men to repentance, is utterly to lose them by implying that they have sinned. O little did I once think that *Repentance* had bin so hard a work, when God offereth pardon of all other sins, against the Law of innocen-

cy,

ty, on so low and reasonable a condition.

Sect. 2. It is not in my thoughts to confound all Conformists, as if there were no difference among your selves. I know that there are many sorts of you:

I. There are some Learned zealous high Conformists, who think they have done good service to God, by all that they have done already; and no doubt, were wise enough to foresee what they were bringing to pass, and are not, by any sober man, to be accused of doing either *they knew not what*, or *what they did not suppose was good, and would countervail all that it should cost to procure it.* Their work hath prospered; And the hinder part of it is yet in their hands; But it is also in the hands of God. To these Reverend persons, I have formerly spoken to their great offense.

Sect. 3. *II.* And I would there were no Ministers so pittifully *dark*, and *young*, and *raw*, or so much out of *love and relish*, with *things Spiritual*, through the prevalency of a stronger appetite, as that their incapacity convinceth me, that I am not to expect much regard from them, as knowing with what ears they hear.

Sect. 4. *III.* There are also some called *Latitudinarians*, who love not *Fopperyes* or *violence*, but are men of *Reason* and *sober Conversations*, though they are not so tender and

ſcrupulous as the Non-conformiſts, but can break over greater rubs.

Sect. 5. *IV.* And there are other *Godly ſober unwilling Conformiſts*, who by the benefit of *ſubſcribing in their own ſence*, have ſtretcht themſelves to do what they have done; who conform on the terms of Mr. *Sprint*, ſubmitting to what would elſe be evil, onely to obtein the liberty of Preaching; (Far be it from me to put in any ſelfiſh ends.) Who are *unwillingly Conformiſts*, as the *Weſtminſter* Aſſembly were, that after took down Prelacy.

Sect. 6. To all of them that yet have ears to hear, I humbly preſent theſe following Requeſts.

I. O be not too angry with thoſe that cenſure you as ſinners. I deteſt raſh cenſoriouſneſs: But you know men that differ in this world, about *Speculatives*, may differ about matters of *Practice too*: The Jeſuiſts, Fryars and Janſeniſts do ſo, in not a *few* or *little* things. And in ſuch a difference, one party muſt needs cenſure the practiſers of the contrary, as ſinners. If you and I differed about Uſury, *Stage playes*, *Gaming*, &c. one party muſt needs think that the other ſide do live in ſin. And who liveth and ſinneth not? Either the cenſure is *true* or *falſe*: If *true*, ſhould you not be as thankful as to one that would ſave you from the Plague? Will *ſin* do you leſs hurt than *cenſure*? If it be *falſe*, Conſider

1. You-

1. You are *fallible*; and the notice of a *possible pernicious* danger, should be received with self-suspicion and thanks.

2. And you should love them the better for their averseness to sin, though they should mistake the matter of it. A proud heart saith swellingly, *Am I to be accounted herein a sinner?* A humble person will say: *Alas, I am too likely to mistake and sin: but if I do not, I will love, even a mistaken enemy of sin.* And to deal faithfully with you, *Had those honest Conformists* of my acquaintance, but come first to the ablest dissenters, and impartially heard and weighed all that they had to say, and not secretly slipt into Conformity, as if they had bin afraid of hearing all, I should have bin the more offended with their Censurers. But God hateth sin, and so must all that truely love him. And they are our best friends that do most to preserve us from it. And they are our greatest enemies, that would flatter us into it. To Preach against *sin*, is your Ministerial Office: And if any man thinks that you make a solemn Covenant to sin, that you may have leave to preach against sin; Yea, that you deliberately commit a great one, that you may have leave to preach against a less in other men, this man deserveth to be heard though he mistake. At Death and Judgment, nothing in the world but *sin* will be your danger: Unjust censures will be none. If we

say,

say nothing to you yet its easie to gather by thecostly terms on which we avoid it, that we take conformity for a sin.

And if any of the people carry it censoriously or contemptuously towards you (which we abhor) remember that you take them for *weak* and *pievish* persons: And honour or contempt is valuable according to the quality of the honourer or contemner: You take your followers to be the *wiser* as they are the *more*: And *we* bear *their censures of us*, and much more: And cannot you bear the censures of a *few* that you judge weaker? You will proclaim the Non-Conformists to be the stronger Christians, if they can bear poverty and restraints, with the censure of the most, when you cannot bear the censure of the fewest, with liberty and Ministerial maintenance and honour.

II. For your souls sake and for the Churches sake, *Take heed of selfishness and Pride, lest it fill you with envy against your Brethren that serve the same Lord, when you think they any way diminish your reputation and honour.* I would have others keep up your Reputation to the utmost; which in the name of God, I charge upon them; Yea, and in honour to prefer you: But if you think they do not, remember that you are the Servants of a *Crucified Christ*, *who made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a Servant,*

vant, and yet this way got a name above every name. As sure as you live, contending for honour, is one of the readiest ways to loose it, and giving it to *others*, and contemning it your selves, is one of the surest ways to get it, It is its motto, *Quod sequitur fugio; quod fugit ipse sequor.*

Self-esteem, and Pride is odious in all: but in a Minister of Christ more odious, than in any man: but never so odious as when it riseth to such malignity, as to *envy* or *hinder* the work of God, because another more esteemed doth it. It is a sin that I am readyer to tremble to think of, than further to reprove.

And remember what work it hath made in the Churches of Christ already. Read but what *Eusebius*, *Socrates*, *Sozomen*, *Evagrius*, *Nicephorus*, &c. say of the fewds of the old Bishops: Read but the Acts of the Councils at *Ephes.* 1, & 2. of *Chalcedon*, at *Ariminum*, at *Sirmium*, at *Nice*, 2d. &c. and if horrour and shame do not overwhelm you, to think what Christian Bishops did, and that so early in the face of the Heathens, you are not men. Read but how *Nazianzene* was used at *Constantinople*, by a Synod of Orthodox Bishops, when he had overcome the *Arians*: Read the Controversies between *Basil* and *Anthymius*, and others: Read the doleful story of *Theophilus Alexandrinus*, and the

the *Egyptian* Monks, and of the same *Theophilus* his manner of dealing against the *Origenists*, and of his double Letters and Present which he sent by *Isidore* a Priest, to the Emperour and *Maximus*, to be given to him that got the better: Read the odious story of the said *Theophilus* and *Epiphanius* his proceedings against *Chrysostome*, and his ejection by a Councel of Bishops: Read the proceedings of *Ithacius* and *Idacius* and their Synods in *Sulp. Severus*: There is no end of instances: Read but the destruction of the many hundred *Brittish* Monks at *Bangor*, and the great suspicions that *Augustine* caused it. Look but on the face of the Greek and Latine Churches to this day, from the beginning and cause of their divisions: And see what the *Lutherans* have done oft times against the *Calvinists* in *Saxony*, and other parts of *Germany*, (as in *Gasp. Peucers* sufferings for one:) And see what the *Roman* Papacy and Clergy have done in the world by Lordly Pride and selfishness: And lastly, See what hath bin done by it in this Land; and at last learn by experience, and judge of Church-mens Pride by the effects.

Brethren, what harm will it do to you, if a Non-Conformist preach by you? if many follow him? If some prefer him before you? Do not others prefer you before him? What if his followers think Conformity to be sin?

Do not you and yours think so of our Non-Conformity? It is not your selves that you preach for, but the peoples Souls: And why may not Christs Gospel profit them from another as well as from you? Nature teacheth men to relish their own food, and partly to feel what doth them good? *Clemens Alex. and. Strom.* 1. giveth it as the reason why the Church (*then*, not *now*) left it to every Communicant at the Sacrament, to *Take their own part*, *Because* man having free will, shall be the chooser, or refuser of his own good. If they choose a worse Teacher than you, it is not *you* but *they* that are the loosers: If they choose a *better*, you have your end, if you are Christians; If you preach *not so well* as another, you are not fit to be Ministers of Christ, if you be not glad that another doth better, and is a blessing to the Flock. If you preach *better*, its two to one but goodness will have an insuparable attraction: Or if mistake make them more capable of good from another than from you, should you not desire that they might have it? Will you say, It is their partial humour? I have heard many Ministers say so, that had reason to have said, It is my *unskilfulness*, or *dulness*: But suppose it be so; A Physician will let his patient take his Medicine from one mans hand, if he refuse it from another. The Father will not let the Infant famish if he will take no meat

meat from him, but from the Mother. If the people had no faults or weaknesses, what need were there of *you* or other Ministers.

I am as apt to speak sharply against the humours and weakness of Religious people, as most that are not *envious* and *malignant*. But I must give them this Testimony, that though many of them cannot well judge of *judiciousness* in their Teachers, yet most of them love a *serious Preacher* and a *Godly Liver*; And few of them distast either *Prelates* or *Conformists*, if they *preach seriously*, and *live Holily*. But when in all the Countreys they see such *Preachers* and *Livers* chosen out for *silencing*, all the world cannot keep them from disliking such Bishops as shall do thus. I am most confident for those of my old acquaintance, that if they had seen Bishops (after their long disacquaintance with them) to have Preached and Prayed in a sound and serious Holy manner, and set themselves to promote the labours of Godly Preachers, and to encourage piety in the people and repress iniquity, they would generally have loved and honoured them, without respect to Presbytery or Independency: It is Godliness that Godly people care for. But since I and abundance about us were ejected, and since many of themselves have bin laid in Goals, it is no more in my power to make them love

such

such Bishops, than to make them love the Goal it self.

Yea further, Brethren, what if the Non-Conformable Minister do give the Sacrament to some, as you do to others? What if they think their way best, as you think yours? What if they call themselves a Church and exercise Discipline, (which without need I would not have them do,) What harm will this do to you or others? If it do them *harm*, let them thank themselves: But to you it can do none, unless the unchristian sin of *pride and envy* cause it: or unless by *reproaches* and *contentiousness* they hinder the success of your labours; which is another thing. I confess I have ever bin jealous of such *Arbitrary Churches*, where there is room for all in one Church, lest they should turn *Anti-Churches* and Theatres of emulation and contention; (which I charge all conscionable persons to abhor:) But all this may be avoided at cheaper rates, than silencing so many laborious Ministers, or excommunicating all the people that are Non-conformists.

III. Joyn lovingly with your Brethren, as Servants of one Lord, to promote the work. Look not strange at them, if they desire your friendship; Yea, if any of them prove censorious and pievish, if you are the more patient, condescending, and forward to love and unity, and to further the peoples good, I shall take

take you for better men than them? And so will all that judge by the fruits of the Spirit. Try this way instead of wrath, and I dare undertake that it shall more maintain your honour, with your peace of Conscience.

Brethren, our great accompt is near: The Judge is at the door: It will be then comfortable to give a true account of Ministerial fidelity, and hear, Well done good and faithful servant; rather than to hear, We have beaten our fellow Servants, or unfaithfully kept the Key of knowledge. The souls of your charge are *many* and *precious*: It is a hard and great work to cure one: to make one Ignorant person understand, one proud person humble, one infidel to believe, one worldling to become Heavenly, or one sensualist to be a mortified Saint: What help then do you need; what labour is requisite, to bring a Parish of many hundred or thousand persons to this change! As our weakness must make us all cry out, *Who is sufficient for these things*, so when *one man* hath *two mens* work to do, he may well say, He is insufficient: In the first three Centuries, when one Congregation had a Bishop with a Colledge or Company of fellow Presbyters, they were not too many, though one onely could preach at once. I speak not uncertainties: We have tryed the Pastoral work; and know by experience that a Parish of a thousand (much more of many thou-

thousand) families, hath work enough for many the most able and diligent Ministers in the Land: Yea, a Parish of an hundred Families, needeth more help than any one Minister is able to afford them: Try them all by personal conference house by house as we have done, and judge. Would you then have the people taught, reformed and saved, or not? If yea, Would you not have necessary help to do it? I cannot believe that man to know truely what it is to be a Minister or a Christian, that perceiveth not a necessity of help if he can have it: And if you had converted all now living, those that are born next will have need of as much labour as their Parents: For *ignorance, sensuality* and *pride* will be born with them.

Thank God therefore that you may have help, and take it, whether you meet in *one* or *two* Assemblies: Help your tolerated Brethren in their work, as those that more desire the good of the peoples souls than they. Consult together for the removing of impediments, and for the strengthening of each other. And if any factious, or froward Nonconformist should happen to be your Neighbour, go to him, and by love and familiarity seek to win and cure him; and you will win the hearts of all good people. And if he be really turbulent, and do more harm in the place than good, I am perswaded the rest of

the Non-conformists will rebuke him, and disown him. I add,

IV. If any difference between you cannot be composed, instead of troubling the people about it, quietly refer it to some indifferent Arbitrators. Is there not a wise man among you? Must *Abrahams* and *Lots* Servants, separate them for a Weil? Must *Paul* and *Barnabas* part for different censures of another mans omission? Shall Christians, Protestants, Ministers, the Teachers of Love, and Concord and Patience, be so *weak*, so *selfish*, so *bad*, such contradicters of their daily Doctrine, as not to be able to carry on Christs work in peace; nor to make an amicable composure of their differences? If you are Christians indeed, the difference is not who shall have the most *followers*, *applause* or *honour*, but who serveth God and saveth souls, in the right and true effectual way? And may not prayer and consultation reconcile such a controversie? For my own part I am conscious of *pride and selfishness*; Yet I can confidently say, that when I had a Pastoral charge, where I needed many Assistants, if I had known where that man lived whom the people would have loved, honoured and profited by, more than my self, I would have rid night and day to get him to be the man: And when I have heard my Neighbour Ministers that were younger men (I can scarce forbear naming them)

them) preach much more affectionately and profitably than my self, I have sate under them with tears of joy. But alas, What hath ten years silence of such men, deprived the souls of the poor people of! I never thought it meet with Saint *Francis* and the Fryers, to abase my self by going naked, or by taking on me to be an Awfe, or by filthiness, or ridiculous behaviour; As if Heaven and a Swinesty were most like: (See *Foulis* his History of Popery.) But I have thought it my duty to cast away deliberately and knowingly much of my Reputation, even with Religious people, by the discharge of such duty as I knew would do it; Believing that Reputation is one thing to be resolutely denyed for Christ, and that he that saveth his honour shall lose it, and he that loseth it for Christ shall have everlasting honour.

Brethren, there is no great matters to be done in the Church of Christ in the midst of so many corruptions and temptations, without *confirmed Resolution:* Resolve to be wholly the servants of Christ, and to seek mens Salvation, and to take no thought for your carnal interest and honour; And then the God whom you serve will take care of it. Think not that other mens selfishness or frowardness is an excuse to yours: Who knoweth man, and knoweth not that *pride* and *selfishness* is as common as sin, thaves, Is the

last dying heart of all our corruption? Will you expect none of it in others, when you know (if you know your selves) that you have much of it in your selves?

Plain dealing is not the Sign of enmity but love. I must tell you, that we cannot but think that you need Repentance, great Repentance, for sinning more (and that by *publick, delibrate, chosen, covenanted, Ministerial sin, protesting* against Repentance) in the day when Judgements called us all to renew our Repentance for our former sins. But yet we suspect our own understandings: We know what different apprehensions of things good men may have: We know that we are great sinners our selves: We take not all this to warrant our censorious separations from you. But we beseech you be not too angry with us, for differencing between good and evil, between him that sweareth, and him that feareth an Oath. As long as we do it to the cost and suffering of our own flesh, which disputeth in us more cunningly and strongly for Conformity, then all the *Dorels*, the *Fullwoods*, the *Stilemans*, &c. *in England*. We have naturally no more love to poverty, to scorn, to a prison, than you have: And why may not those that do nothing else almost say, that its like we study to know the truth, as hard as any of you all? And the love of beggery, scorn and imprisonment,

ment, is not likely much to byas us. And if you think that our honour with our party doth it, you must needs think that we (who so sharply reprove them,) do think very highly of that poor despised party, when we prefer their opinions, not only before your *Magnates & Plures*, but also before our Livelihoods, Liberties and Lives. Woe to the Hypocrite that hath no better a reward!

And why should we do it? Were we not as capable of the more *Noble* and *General* applause as you, if we could have taken your way?

As we are none of your Judges then, Be you none of ours, but let us with *Resolued unity* (though not *uniformity*) serve that one God whom we are all devoted to. Remember that to *Preach Love* is your Ministerial work; And to practice it is your Christian work. Resolve as much to maintain *Christian Love* as inviolate, even to Martyrdom, as the Martyrs did to maintain the *Christian Faith*. Remember *Ridley* and *Hooper*: You may come to *Ridley*'s Confessions ere you die. We purpose not to Unminister you so much as *Gildas* did his *Brittains*, nor to separate from you so much as *Martin* did to the death, from all the Neighbour Synods and Bishops, for a far lesser cause than the silencing of eighteen hundred Ministers. We take not

you whom I now write to, to be consenting to this work. (Though your *silence* and *non-resistance*, hath bred such thoughts of you in people, as we would fain have you cure by the contrary means.) We are for peace: Be not you against it: But we cannot buy it, by deserting the Ministry, to which we were consecrated and devoted, nor by neglecting so many thousand miserable souls. Bring things in *England* once to that pass, that really our labour may be unnecessary, in the judgement of those that are not *Infidels*, *Ignorants*, or *Malignant enemies* of a holy life, and we will presently gratifie all that desire our silence, or our banishment, and will not trouble men with needless work.

Thus, Brethren, you see, I have presumed no higher than to Petition you; And that not to your cost or detriment; nor for our preferment, wealth or ease: We aske you not for food or rayment; We crave from you none of your Dignities, nor Estates: Though when I find this Author disswading us from our Ministry, because the people are *poor*, I think that reason might almost as aptly have served to perswade us to live no longer, because the world is too poor to keep us; We do but eat if we preach, and so we must if we do not: And I think it had savoured of no excess of Charity and Ministerial ingenuity, if he had rather said, *Brethren, you must per-*

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form your undertaken Miniſtry, and we and the peoples ſouls have need of all your help; And the maintenance is given for the work, Therefore you that work with us, ſhall have part of the Church maintenance with us, at leaſt a fifth part, as was allowed to the ejected by the Parliament, becauſe the people cannot maintain you, and it is hard to ſerve God without anxiety, while your families are in want. This had better beſeemed our Brethren; but we crave and expect no ſuch thing from you; but only patiently to ſuffer us to live and labour by you, and let God provide for us as he pleaſe.

And if we had expected that heretofore you had Petitioned our Rulers, for the liberty of our Miniſtry, it had bin no unreaſonable expectation. All knew that our own Petitions had no hope: Miniſters ſhould of all men have bin moſt ſenſible of the Churches breaches, loſs and danger, and moſt compaſſionate of the peoples ſouls: If you had but humbly acquainted our Rulers, That all our labours conjoyned are too little; that you needed our help, and the ignorant our teaching; That your own judgement was, that our Miniſtry was more neceſſary than our perſonal Conformity,

1. You know not but you might have bin heard: For no doubt our Rulers thought they did that which the Reverend Church-

men did advise or think best: I hope you do not think that our civil Rulers would have done all that they have done against us, if it had bin against the Bishops and conformable Clergies judgment and advise: Civil Governours are never so cruel in matters of Religion, as the Ruling and exasperated Clergy are, as the Histories of all ages testifie.

2. Or at least you might have had the greater peace of Conscience, in all the confusions that have followed, and said, *It is not long of us.*

And you would have acquitted your selves in the judgement of all your hearers, and they would have bin the less prejudiced against your Ministry.

Had you Petitioned and prevailed but for these two things, you had healed all our breaches,

First, That the door of enterance might not have bin barred by any other subscriptions, professions or Oaths, than what were used in the Churches of Christ, till the exaltation of the Papacy (for 600. years,) besides the Oaths of Allegeance and supremacy, and the subscribing the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, in the 39. Articles, according to the 13*th*. of Queen *Elizabeth*.

Secondly, That those (so subscribing) who dare not use the Liturgy and Ceremonies, might

might have leave to *preach* in the Churches which use them, under Laws which shall restrain them from all unpeaceable opposition to what they dare not use, or to the Government of the Church. And having mentioned this, What if I added yet this clause to my present Petition to you?

V. That you will yet Petition for us, or rather for the Church of Christ, that upon the foresaid terms we may be, if possible, taken in to the established Ministry, If not, yet tolerated as Lecturers under you in such Churches, where the Ministers desire us, not taking any of their maintenance from them, but trusting God for our daily bread.

By this means you shall have no need to fear our injuring of your wealth or reputation; Nor the strengthening of the Papists by the weakening of Protestants through our own divisions; (Onely let not the people who scruple Conformity, be therefore denyed Church-Communion and Sacraments.)

And now as God will judge, so let the world judge, & let posterity judge whether we are unworthy in comparison of the present Ministers of *England*, to be permitted to preach Christs Gospel on these self-denying and self-abasing terms; And whether they that cry out of the danger of Popery, Infidelity, Profaneness and Heresies, and yet had rather

rather let them in all, than give us leave to exercise that Ministry to which we were consecrated, in poverty and subjection; and while they cry out of Divisions, will not lay by the *Dividing-engines*; should rather accuse us or themselves, if the evils overwhelm us, which they seem to fear?

It is not *pleasure, profit or worldly preferments*, that we contend for: We would do no man hurt or wrong: If our lovers of Church-power do think us intolerable, because we obey them not as fully as they desire, we profess before God and Man, that it is not because we would not be subject and obedient to any, as far as will stand with our obedience to God, but only because we *dare not*, we *will not* do that which we believe that God forbideth us: And if we erre, it is not for want of studying, perhaps as hard and impartially as they, to know the truth: And to him that thinketh he doth evil it is sin. It is sin, and no small or tolerable sin, which our consciences fear, in our forbearing subscriptions and Conformity: If they also take it to *be a sin* to suffer us to preach the Gospel, and a *greater sin*, than to suffer the inundation of Infidelity, Popery and the rest which they say is ready to break in upon us, And if they think our not Subscribing, Swearing, *&c.* to be in us so *great a sin*, that the punishment laid on

Swearers,

Swearers, *Drunkards*, or *Fornicators*, will not serve turn to avenge it on our selves, nor any other of our personal sufferings, unless the souls of many thousands, and the Protestant Religion, and our Posterity also suffer for it, the Judgments of God must be endured. But remember not Lord our offences, nor the offences of our Fore-fathers, neither take thou vengeance of our sins: Spare us good Lord; Spare thy people whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever. And hasten O Lord Jesus thy more Righteous Judgement.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

~~P. 19. l. 22. r. the thing, p. 19. l. 3. del. that, p. 28. l. 21. r. you, p. 45. l. 15. del. [illegible], p. 65. l. 6. r. work, p. 67. l. 28. r. by not only, p. 70. l. 3. for [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 89. l. 3. r. intolerable, p. 92. l. 1. r. make your, p. 108. l. 21. r. and renounce all.~~

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4.15.8.

End

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